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President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 47, 113 and 149 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The President: We are meeting today to resume consideration of agenda items 47, 113 and 149 in order to discuss the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. Member States called for the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission during the World Summit in 2005 to focus attention on reconstruction and institution-building in order to promote sustainable development in the aftermath of conflicts.

The Peacebuilding Commission was formally established by the General Assembly, acting concurrently with the Security Council, on 20 December 2005. Resolution 60/180 also requested the Secretary-General to establish the Peacebuilding Fund.

I would like to thank the Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, His Excellency Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, for his leadership. I would also like to thank the Vice-Chairpersons, Her Excellency Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador and His Excellency Johan Løvald of Norway, as well as His Excellency Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, in his capacity as Chairman of the country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone, for all of their hard work.

We need to recognize that the Peacebuilding Commission has embarked on crucial tasks in Burundi and Sierra Leone. The challenge now lies primarily in the need for the international community to deliver on the pledges made to assist the peoples of those countries in their efforts to rebuild the institutional and human capacity needed for comprehensive and lasting peace.

We all have a collective responsibility to ensure that the strengthened peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations develops as envisioned by Member States. Our stock-taking of progress to date is an important step in this process.

As members are aware, the Security Council held an open debate on the Peacebuilding Commission on 31 January. I welcome this opportunity to debate the issue in the General Assembly, as this will contribute towards a better understanding of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the Economic and Social Council, in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

There is a strong link between poverty, weak State capacity and instability, which leads to relapses into conflict. It is therefore critical that our

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Organization play a leading role in helping countries to build and strengthen their institutional capacities, which promotes coexistence and the peaceful and sustainable resolution of conflicts.

National authorities play a critical role in creating the right atmosphere for sustainable peace. The United Nations role in peacebuilding should affirm national ownership, as well as the supporting role of the international community. Together with all relevant actors, the Peacebuilding Commission has an important substantive and coordinating role to play in promoting post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, including respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The Peacebuilding Fund can play a critical role in providing countries with start-up funding for early recovery. But the Fund should not be seen as a substitute for the long-term financial assistance needed to support the transition from recovery to sustainable development. In this regard, the Commission can play an important role in coordinating and marshalling predictable financing.

To date, donors have contributed and pledged over $140 million to the Peacebuilding Fund, and many non-traditional donors have indicated their intention to contribute. I would urge all Member States to work together to reach the $250 million funding target. I will personally write to a number of potential donors to encourage them to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund so that the funding target is met.

The Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund are still in the early stages of becoming fully operational. We should therefore take note of the lessons learned so far and, by extending our fullest cooperation and support, do our utmost to ensure that the Commission discharges its mandate successfully.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Peter Burian, President of the Security Council.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia), President of the Security Council: I wish to thank you, Madam, for having convened this plenary meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and for having invited me to take part in the debate. The Security Council, along with the General Assembly, established the Peacebuilding Commission. We have a shared interest with the Assembly in its development and effectiveness. In that context, Security Council members agreed that it would be useful for me to participate today, in my capacity as President of the Council, to set out our common views on the key issues for the Peacebuilding Commission's future.

Post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction in countries emerging from crisis is one of the most significant challenges on the agenda of the United Nations. It was for that very reason that world leaders decided, at the United Nations Summit in September 2005, to create the Peacebuilding Commission. Their aim was to ensure an integrated approach to peacebuilding through improved United Nations capacity to coordinate among political, military, humanitarian and development actors.

The urgency of this work is, indeed, very high. As the representative of the World Bank recalled last week, at the Security Council's 5627th meeting, on post-conflict peacebuilding, more than a billion people living — or rather, existing — in extreme poverty are directly affected by civil war or are at high risk of being affected in the very near future.

That Security Council open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding, which took place last Wednesday, was held following the first two rounds of the Commission's country-specific meetings last year. The discussion was aimed at giving additional impetus to a mutually supportive partnership among all actors who are contributing to the peacebuilding process and to facilitating the constructive work of the Peacebuilding Commission. In this respect, the debate reaffirmed the need for the close and constructive interaction of all the main United Nations bodies for the achievement of our common goal of improving international cooperation in the peacebuilding area.

The debate was also an opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen the link between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council. In this connection, Council members stressed the importance of focusing the Commission's work on its core mandate of providing recommendations to post-conflict States in danger of relapse into civil strife and useful recommendations and assessments about specific countries to the Security Council in such cases. The members of the Council have pledged to strengthen its role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in line with its specific competences and mandate under the Charter.

The countries participating in the Security Council debate welcomed the initial work being undertaken by the Commission in identifying priority areas that need to be addressed in Burundi and Sierra Leone. They further welcomed the operationalization and recent staffing of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the establishment of the Peacebuilding Fund.

The discussion in the Council reaffirmed the crucial importance of national ownership in the design, implementation and sustaining of peacebuilding activities. It further underlined the significant potential of the Commission to propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery and to develop best practices on issues that require extensive collaboration. In that regard, the Commission must play its role to the fullest. A number of Council members expressed their hope that by the time of its first anniversary in June this year, the Peacebuilding Commission will have had a measurable impact on the ground in the two African countries under consideration.

The discussion in the Security Council emphasized the critical need for a comprehensive approach to achieving stable peace and an effective settlement of armed conflicts, which would combine preventive diplomacy, crisis management and peacebuilding efforts geared to post-conflict reconstruction, ensuring continuity and consistency while moving from one stage to another.

The international community must take appropriate action to support vulnerable States and people in the transition from conflict to sustainable peace with robust stabilization and reconstruction assistance. We have great expectations of the Peacebuilding Commission's role in stabilizing countries emerging from crisis and averting a recurrence of conflict. In this context, the Security Council and the General Assembly should work hard to meet those expectations and to make the Commission a success.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, President of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania), President of the Economic and Social Council: First, I wish to thank you, Madam, for convening today's meeting and inviting me to this debate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. This debate will certainly help to point the way forward on how best to improve the contributions of different United Nations bodies to the success of the Peacebuilding Commission, in line with their specific competencies and mandates.

The Economic and Social Council welcomes the opportunity to reiterate its commitment to working with the General Assembly and the Security Council in addressing the challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding. Indeed, it may be recalled that it was a request of the General Assembly in its resolution 55/217 for the Economic and Social Council to consider the creation of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict that led to the creation of the advisory groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi. Those groups played a pioneering role in advancing the concept of an integrated approach to peace and development and were a catalyst for addressing the gap in the United Nations architecture for dealing with post-conflict countries.

The assignment of that pioneering work by the General Assembly to the Economic and Social Council was based on the recognition that the Council's mandate in the economic, social and environmental fields enables it to play an important role vis-à-vis countries emerging from conflict by bringing its coordinating role and responsibility to bear on peacebuilding and economic and social reconstruction. The Economic and Social Council's oversight role in matters of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance was also considered of particular value in promoting better integration between relevant policy and operational dimensions, thereby complementing ongoing work that was taking place in the General Assembly and the Security Council on advancing the concept of an integrated approach to peacebuilding. The Economic and Social Council's capacities remain valuable and relevant with the advent of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration rightly emphasized the critical role of peace and security for human well-being and for eradicating poverty in all its forms. As I noted in my statement to the Security Council last week, nine out of ten countries with the lowest human development indicators have experienced conflict at some point or other since 1990. Those countries are clearly the farthest away from achieving the targets and goals set out in the United Nations development agenda. The new roles assigned at the 2005 World Summit to the

Economic and Social Council to conduct annual ministerial reviews of progress made in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, will strengthen its capacity to contribute in the area of peacebuilding, as they will give the Council the opportunity to continually assess how conflict is affecting the implementation of the development agenda, and to review and share lessons learned on how strategies based on the Millennium Development Goals can help forestall violent conflict.

The high-level biennial development cooperation forum can also provide a unique opportunity for the Council to examine how development cooperation can best support countries in conflict or emerging from it. The experience of the ad hoc advisory groups, including the group on Haiti, underlines the need to find appropriate mechanisms to promote good donorship in countries emerging from conflict in order to ensure that the population in those countries obtains some tangible dividends of peace. The Council could consider that issue in future development cooperation forums and make its conclusions available to the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission can already now draw on the lessons learned from the experience of the ad hoc advisory groups in the area of resource mobilization, as well as other lessons that have been enumerated in reports of the Secretary-General on the assessment of the work of the ad hoc advisory groups.

In the spirit of sharing, the Economic and Social Council would also be interested in the results of the lessons learned that the Commission will be compiling as a way of helping the Council to consider and follow up on the Commission's recommendations. Those lessons learned could also be disseminated through the Economic and Social Council's subsidiary machinery and the networks of non-governmental organizations, in consultative status with the Council, to a wider audience.

The Council is greatly encouraged by the emerging consensus that interaction between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council would enhance the effective functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council is ready to explore practical modalities for interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, in line with General Assembly resolutions 60/180 on the establishment of the Commission and 61/16 on reform of the Economic and Social Council.

Our common objective should be to mobilize the whole institutional machinery of the United Nations to promote a wide array of policy approaches and best practices in order to develop answers to the complex and difficult needs of post-conflict countries and prevent their relapse into conflict. The meeting today will contribute to a wider consensus on the direction in which the entire system should go.

On its part, the Economic and Social Council is ready to support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission collectively and through its individual members on the Commission's Organizational Committee to develop a viable peacebuilding strategy rooted in integrated policies that promote poverty eradication, sustainable development and human rights. We believe that this approach will prove its lasting added value.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola), Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission: I am particularly honoured to address the Assembly in my capacity as Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission on agenda item 47 related to United Nations reform and the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The holding of this meeting by the General Assembly is of great political importance and symbolism. Indeed, the decision on the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was taken by the heads of State at their 2005 Summit in this very conference Hall. That is also the case for the subsequent adoption of the founding resolution on 20 December of the same year. The General Assembly was also the framework in which the difficult but rich negotiations on United Nations reform that led to the establishment of that body took place.

This preliminary debate, which precedes the submission in June of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission to the General Assembly, is an expression of the reiterated interest of the general membership of our Organization in the state of affairs in the Peacebuilding Commission since its launching.

The interest of the general membership in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as demonstrated by the magnitude and quality of participation in the open debate held by the Security Council last week, also represents a mark of the political will aimed at finding ways of moving faster in order to meet the high expectations on the ground, particularly in countries emerging from conflict.

The decision to establish the Peacebuilding Commission brought a new ray of hope to millions of people trapped in post-conflict situations. However, bright ideas will not be enough if they are not followed by concrete actions. I therefore hope that our debates both in the Security Council and today here in the General Assembly can serve as a catalyst for the achievement of concrete results on the ground, the acceleration of the clarification of outstanding procedural issues in the Commission, and most importantly, the achievement of the Commission's main purpose, as defined in the 2005 Outcome Document, of bringing together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery.

In that connection, the General Assembly can play a very important role by rallying its entire membership towards achieving the shared aim of realizing the possible outcome of a common strategy, capable of mobilizing the resources needed for post-conflict reconstruction in the countries on the Commission's agenda.

I am confident that you, Madam, in your personal capacity as President of the General Assembly, have the moral and political authority to appeal to the international community for a positive response to meeting the pressing demand for contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund. Indeed, a more satisfactory response to the Fund by the international community could determine the difference between success and failure in peacebuilding. In that connection, I welcome the initiative you announced just this morning to write to donors, encouraging them to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund.

While speaking before the Security Council last week, I stated that the Peacebuilding Commission is a body to which the Member States dedicated much valuable time to establishing. I also stressed that that body will perform only in accordance with the means which the international community puts at its disposal in order to meet the high expectations of the populations of countries emerging from conflict.

Moreover, I described peacebuilding as complex by nature and a long-term process requiring an equally persistent and long-term commitment by all. It is consequently an ambitious project that needs adequate means. Meanwhile, it has been generally observed that the Peacebuilding Commission experienced a very modest start if we take into account, among other factors, the then-agreed requirement that a small Peacebuilding Support Office be established within existing resources, while many Member States equally believed that it was important to give the Office and the Commission the ability to function from the very beginning.

As we proceed, we measure the magnitude of the tasks before the Peacebuilding Commission and the need for suitable means. I am convinced that, taking its responsibilities into account, the General Assembly will play an important role in the assessment of the ambitious tasks required of that new body at the appropriate time, including on the occasion of the discussion of its first report, to be submitted in June.

We are at a turning point in laying the foundation for this project. After holding two country-specific meetings and a briefing on the countries under consideration in the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as launching a working group on post-conflict lessons learned and the ongoing staffing of the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Commission has paved the way for the next decisive step and for the formation of strategies that take fully into account the interests of the peoples and Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone. I believe that the fundamental principle of national ownership is being safeguarded.

Though the initial organizational weaknesses are yet to be fully addressed, the required steps are being taken to ensure the regular functioning, particularly of the Organizational Committee, making sure that it acts as a focal point for discussion of and guidance to the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission by holding its formal and informal meetings regularly.

The elaboration of a country-specific plan of action and of a programme of action of the Organizational Committee will allow the Commission to serve better the interests of the countries under

consideration, including through field visits already programmed, while efforts are under way to provide needed and timely information on a regular basis to the Member States and the international community as a whole on the activities of the Commission.

As has been frequently noted, rebuilding societies after conflict is much more complex and difficult than putting an end to fighting. Solutions cannot be imported. Peace has to be built by the people affected, but they cannot do it alone. The international community can and must play a role and help in the consolidation of peace in order to overcome the legacies of war. If that does not happen, local conflicts will resume, threatening to destabilize larger regions and undermining development and hope for a brighter future. We have just started the process of reversing that trend and succeeding in Burundi and Sierra Leone. It is only when we do so that we will be able to give hope to those living in post-conflict situations, expecting an equal contribution from the Peacebuilding Commission and thus fostering its credibility.

The Peacebuilding Commission can fully benefit from its innovative nature and composition, as well as from the experience accumulated by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies. Success or failure will depend on the commitment that I am sure this debate in the General Assembly will help to galvanize.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on the related agenda items regarding the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The General Assembly, as we well know, is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations, and the Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the opportunity to participate in this open debate, not only acknowledging the role of this body in relation to discussions on any questions or matters within the scope of the United Nations Charter, but also paying due regard to the important function of the General Assembly in relation to the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is within that context that the Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the opportunity to participate, while emphasizing that the open debates in the Security Council last Wednesday and again today in the General Assembly only provide the basis for some preliminary exchanges which may inform but not substitute for the annual report to be presented by the Commission to the General Assembly and the subsequent review, as mandated by resolution 60/180.

Like any fledgling body, the Peacebuilding Commission is still grappling with the development of its own rules of procedure and working methods, notwithstanding its successes to date. The Non-Aligned Movement would like to see a more proactive Peacebuilding Commission. The rules of procedure need to be strengthened and should include the requirements for regular meetings of the Organizational Committee in a manner that would allow the Committee to act as a planning, review and evaluation mechanism in between country-specific meetings. There should also be a clear timetable to better prepare for country-specific meetings.

As an important element of its working methods, the Organizational Committee should, among other things, make a clear determination as to the degree and level of progress made to date as well as chart the way forward after each country-specific meeting. That assessment and evaluation should be based on the Chair's summary of discussions held in country-specific meetings, in addition to inputs from the countries under consideration. And dare I add that, judging from the joint meetings that were held yesterday, I think we are making progress in the right direction.

The Movement supports the view that the decisions and recommendations of the Organizational Committee must be based on a holistic, coherent and inclusive approach and must also reflect a careful balance in addressing situations in countries under review. Balance can be achieved only through an integrated approach based on active engagement with the principal organs of the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Council. Such balance and inclusiveness should also extend to contributions from both donor and non-donor countries. It should be emphasized that decisions regarding the operations of the Peacebuilding Commission should necessarily be taken within the Organizational Committee, which, as the Chairman himself has pointed out, is the focal point for all discussions and guidance in relation to the Commission's activities.

The Non-Aligned Movement remains firm in its position that the provision of financial resources should be guided by national priorities and based on the collective decision of the members of the

Peacebuilding Commission. Recommendations for assistance must be based on the priority areas established by the Government of the country under consideration, as well as other national authorities and actors. The issue of national ownership is critical, as it lends legitimacy to the consolidation process and provides continuity and sustainability to peacebuilding efforts long after international involvement ends. National ownership should mean exactly that — national ownership.

The effective and timely disbursement of resources for peacebuilding is fundamental to the process of recovery — a fact driven home by the representatives of both Burundi and Sierra Leone in their recent presentations before the Security Council. The Non-Aligned Movement clearly understands — and it should be understood — that actual disbursement can fall short of pledges and promises, but, if the Peacebuilding Commission is to be taken seriously, then its approval for disbursement of financial and other support must be accompanied by swift action. We must never lose sight of the sense of urgency which must underpin its work.

To assist in the process of determining the size of country envelopes, the Non-Aligned Movement advocates a much closer working relationship between the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Organizational Committee. Such a consultative approach will provide greater transparency and inclusiveness in the decision-making process.

The Non-Aligned Movement strongly shares the view of the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission that the work of the Commission will be incomplete and fall short if its meetings in New York become the sole medium through which the situation in countries under consideration are evaluated. To advance its peacebuilding strategy, the Commission should seek to gain a clearer appreciation and understanding of local dynamics in relation to peacebuilding efforts on the ground. In that regard, there is therefore a need for early field missions by the Peacebuilding Commission to Burundi and to Sierra Leone to, among other things, evaluate the situation on the ground and exchange information with Government authorities, civil society and other key stakeholders. Field missions should, in essence, be an integral tool of the Commission. Again, coming out of the joint meeting we held yesterday, it is encouraging to note that such field missions will soon become reality.

The Non-Aligned Movement would like to use this opportunity to reiterate its appreciation to the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Chairpersons of the country-specific meetings and the Peacebuilding Support Office, as well as our own Vice-President, for their efforts to date in carrying forward the work of the Commission.

I would also like to reaffirm the Movement's commitment to working towards the success and full implementation of the Commission's mandate, which, by extension, will determine the success achieved on the ground for countries in need.

Finally, the international community must remain committed and vigilant with respect to the overall effort aimed at consolidating the gains and achievements made, while mitigating the possibility of the countries under review relapsing into conflict and civil strife.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union would like to thank you, Madam President, for having organized this debate, and we would also like to thank the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that initiated the request for this debate. Today's meeting follows on the heels of last week's open debate in the Security Council and is an opportunity to continue a dialogue between the Peacebuilding Commission and its partners in the United Nations system on ways to increase their cooperation. We are confident that the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the General Assembly and the Security Council, will benefit from this dialogue. What is even more important, though, is that the countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission will benefit from such debates, as they will lead to more effective coordination and to the implementation of peacebuilding strategies.

The European Union sees the establishment of the Commission as a key achievement of the United Nations reform process. Together with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, it forms the core of the new United Nations

peacebuilding architecture. As a flexible instrument, the Peacebuilding Commission is learning by doing. In our view, members should be willing to work creatively within the framework given.

Since its inception, the European Union has supported the concept of the Commission: a body that will ensure an integrated approach to peacebuilding, taking into account the links between security, development, human rights and the rule of law. That corresponds very closely to the European Union's comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, development and peacebuilding. Over the years, the European Union has developed and used an array of instruments. They include political and development-related tools as well as conflict-prevention and crisis-management mechanisms.

The European Union, the member States of the European Union and the European Community engage in peacebuilding activities worldwide — in Africa and in Asia, as well as in the Middle East, Europe, Central Asia and Latin America. European member States and the European Community fund and implement projects in all areas of peacebuilding. A few important areas are demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, good governance, reconciliation efforts, children- and gender-related post-conflict assistance, trade-related measures and reconstruction operations. The European Union is committed to actively supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission on the basis of its experience, resources and worldwide operability.

The Peacebuilding Commission has got off to a good start. After only two sets of country-specific meetings, it has identified areas of priority action for the two countries under consideration. The Commission has also established a dialogue among the Governments concerned, the United Nations system, institutional donors, regional actors and members of the Peacebuilding Commission. Now the recommendations of the Commission must be implemented in the countries concerned and within the institutional framework of the United Nations. Here, the Commission also needs the support of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Dialogue must also be broadened in the countries concerned to include national civil society, the private sector and other relevant parties.

One year after its establishment, the Commission will also have to make decisions as to its strategic goals. If the Commission is to add value to peacebuilding efforts worldwide, and particularly in the countries themselves, it will have to be ambitious. It will have to consist of more than the tools we already have — more than a mere coordination mechanism and more than a donors' conference. Promoting the development of a viable peacebuilding strategy which has broad ownership is where the Peacebuilding Commission can really add value.

The European Union would like to contribute to the discussion among Peacebuilding Commission members on structuring the future work of the Commission and its interaction with other actors. In so doing, we will draw on our own experience in coordinating EU programmes, as well as on the experience in the first country-specific meetings.

The Commission has defined general areas of priority for each country under consideration. It will now be useful to further prioritize within those areas, in consultation with the countries concerned, United Nations country teams, donors, civil society and the private sector. Defining priorities necessarily means making a selection among a huge number of possible areas of engagement. The Peacebuilding Commission should focus on the following areas: those that have a direct and traceable link to the causes of conflict, those in which instruments of classical development are not available or functional and those in where coordination and integration are especially needed. All peacebuilding initiatives in the field should be linked to existing strategies and programmes so as to avoid duplication of efforts.

We want the Commission to be able to work coherently, continuously and in a results-oriented way. To achieve that, the Commission should focus on activities in the field. It should enhance cooperation with all relevant actors, including donors and non-State actors. It should make use of regular informal meetings in between formal meetings and find a way to capture and condense lessons learned from its work.

There are many ways to enhance cooperation among the Peacebuilding Commission, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Regular meetings between the Peacebuilding Commission Chairs and the Presidents of those bodies would be one possibility. Inviting those

Chairs and the Chairs of country-specific meetings to brief those bodies would be another.

The European Union remains committed to working on integrated peacebuilding strategies with the Peacebuilding Commission and with the countries concerned. We are determined to make this key project of United Nations reform a success and to ensure that its impact is felt positively in the regions where it is engaged.

The President: I call now on the representative of the Netherlands, who will speak in his capacity as Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands), Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone: Allow me to thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to join the Assembly in this important debate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The debate is timely, for the work of the Commission is now at an important stage in which the contribution of all actors and interested parties is needed. The interest shown by the General Assembly in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission is therefore very welcome.

In my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone, I should like to inform the Assembly about progress made in recent months, as well as about activities that will be taking place in the coming weeks.

In response to requests from the Government of Sierra Leone and from the Security Council, in June last year the Organizational Committee selected Sierra Leone to be one of the first countries to be considered by the Peacebuilding Commission. Since then, focused discussions have taken place in two sessions of the Peacebuilding Commission, gathering in its country-specific format for Sierra Leone. I should like to summarize some of the key outcomes of those discussions in the following seven points.

First, in Sierra Leone, important achievements have been made to date in restoring peace and stability and promoting post-conflict recovery. This was highlighted during both country-specific meetings.

Secondly, the Commission welcomed the efforts of the international community in supporting the Government in developing and implementing the various strategies — the poverty reduction strategy, the medium-term expenditure framework and the peace consolidation strategy.

Thirdly, members stressed that all peacebuilding efforts should be linked to the existing strategies under the leadership and ownership of the Government of Sierra Leone. In this context, the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations have established a National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding to relate to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. It will bring together Government, United Nations, donor and civil society representatives to jointly address peacebuilding priorities.

Fourthly, members and the Government of Sierra Leone agreed that specific challenges need to be addressed in four critical areas: social and youth empowerment and employment; the consolidation of democracy and good governance; justice and security sector reform; and capacity-building.

Fifthly, Sierra Leone was declared eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund. It is expected that a country envelope in excess of the initially indicated $25 million will be made available once the review process stipulated in the terms of reference for the Fund is completed.

Sixthly, members urged the international community to ensure an adequate level of external assistance and to lend support to the Government of Sierra Leone to broaden its donor base and secure assistance, including further debt relief.

Lastly, the Commission also called on the international community to provide, in a timely manner, adequate resources and support for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections, including capacity-building to ensure women's equal participation in the political process. In this, a great deal of progress has been observed. The initial resource gap of $7 million for the elections has been reduced to less than $3 million, with further pledges expected. Here, progress has been made in various respects: an independent National Electoral Commission has been established to prepare credible elections, an electoral code of conduct has been signed by eight political parties, the Sierra Leone police force has been strengthened and a media code of conduct for electoral reporting is being discussed country-wide.

I believe that these early developments show that the Peacebuilding Commission is making a contribution to elevating post-conflict countries to firmer ground in their search for the building of durable peace. It is in-country — in Sierra Leone itself — that its contribution should become apparent, and the first signals that that is happening are encouraging. I am particularly encouraged by the way in which all stakeholders — chief among them the Government of Sierra Leone — are investing in our discussions and joint efforts under the umbrella of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We must now maintain this momentum in our discussions in New York. In my capacity as Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone, I have — together with the Norwegian representative, as Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Burundi — laid down a work plan for our activities in the coming months. It will guide our work ahead of the next country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone, which is due to take place in March or April. It sets a timeline and provides for a division of responsibilities for actions to be undertaken by the Sierra Leone Government, the United Nations system and other stakeholders.

A key focus of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone in the coming months will be the development of an integrated approach aimed at clearly outlining the commitments made by the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community.

There can be no denying the actual and potential contribution that the Peacebuilding Commission can make to the promotion of peace and stability in Sierra Leone. With the continued involvement of all stakeholders — the Government of Sierra Leone, the Commission's full membership, the various United Nations bodies on the ground, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector — and with continued engagement by the General Assembly, the Security Council and other United Nations bodies, we will be able to make a difference. The Peacebuilding Commission's discussions thus far have been guided by a spirit of openness and commitment. It is that spirit that will remain essential as we continue our discussions in New York.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Burundi.

Mr. Løvald (Norway), Chairman of the country-specific meetings on Burundi: An unacceptable number of peace agreements disintegrate, and countries are lapsing back into conflict. The need to do better is obvious. To succeed — which we must — we must maintain and, if possible, further increase the momentum behind our peacebuilding efforts. While our focus at all times must be on concrete results at the country level, we are all also aware of the importance of this endeavour for the United Nations and the international community as a whole. The Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, has the potential to be a powerful tool for meeting challenges in a more coordinated and comprehensive manner.

Madam President, as your predecessor, Jan Eliasson, said at the inaugural meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on 23 June last year, it is in the country-specific settings that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission will ultimately be judged. With that in mind, the Commission quickly started its work with Burundi and Sierra Leone last autumn. I am humbled and honoured to be a Vice-Chair of the Commission at this initial stage and to lead its work on Burundi. My observations here will concentrate on Burundi.

At the outset, the Government of Burundi was asked to give the Commission guidance on critical peacebuilding challenges facing the country. The Commission agreed with the Government of Burundi that these were good governance, the rule of law, security sector reform and community recovery. On the basis of those critical challenges, a number of important peacebuilding priorities were identified: inter alia, strengthening national dialogue, continued efforts to include women in peace consolidation, sustained political support from countries in the region and strengthening the Government's ability to deliver on basic services, inter alia, through budgetary support.

The Peacebuilding Commission's engagement with Burundi is now entering a new phase. A work plan for the Commission's efforts in support of Burundi is being presented to its members this week. A key focus of the work plan is to develop an integrated approach to peacebuilding, clearly outlining Burundi's

commitments and a response to be provided by the international community in critical areas.

The elaboration of an integrated approach to peacebuilding will be an important tool in our future work. The purpose of such an approach is threefold: it must demonstrate where additional efforts are important in order to achieve effective peacebuilding; it must indicate who should do what in order to fulfil those tasks, in terms of both the Government's commitments and the efforts to be undertaken by other stakeholders, be they the United Nations, the international financial institutions, institutional donors, regional actors, bilateral donors or civil society; and it must present benchmarks and allow for the review of commitments and pledges.

The Government of Burundi has ownership over this process and is well equipped to exercise that ownership, not least through the establishment of a joint peacebuilding mechanism bringing together the Government, the United Nations and civil society and bilateral actors. We intend to work closely with that body on the work plan and on the integrated approach to peacebuilding.

Our support for peacebuilding in Burundi is a commitment that will last a number of years. By definition, it will involve a special partnership between Burundi and the international community.

Speaking in my national capacity, I can say that Norway, for its part, will contribute its share. We will work with the Peacebuilding Commission on Burundi as long as necessary. We have already made our contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund and will consider additional allocations in the future. In that connection, I compliment you, Madam President, on your initiative to write to a number of potential donors to encourage them to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund so that the funding target is met.

The Norwegian Minister of International Development paid a visit to Burundi last year to discuss increased bilateral cooperation in support of peacebuilding and development. For that reason, we emphasize the importance of the donors' round table set for March this year in Bujumbura, in which Norway and other donors will participate. In order to increase our bilateral contact, Norway will establish representation in Bujumbura in the near future. We are pleased that the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Burundi will be paying a visit to Norway later this week.

We are very aware of the challenging task that the Peacebuilding Commission has taken on, both in Burundi and in Sierra Leone. It is important that all stakeholders, together with the Governments concerned, succeed in this undertaking. By so doing, the work of the Peacebuilding Commission will also be an example for other countries and peoples showing that earlier cycles of conflict and renewed violence can be broken. In those endeavours, the full support of the General Assembly will be much needed. The discussions today and in the Security Council last week are testimony of the importance Member States place on the peacebuilding agenda.

The annual report to be submitted by the Peacebuilding Commission to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly will provide another opportunity to take stock of where we are and where additional efforts are necessary. That is a task to which all of us can, and must, contribute.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador), Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's working group on lessons learned (*spoke in Spanish*). We welcome your initiative, Madam President, to convene this debate with the participation of Member States.

Throughout its history, the United Nations has accumulated a number of experiences and lessons learned in assisting countries in transition from a culture of violence to one of peace. Following the end of conflict, such countries aspire to a new way of life that includes security, sustainable development and the rule of law. That is a new challenge for the Organization.

El Salvador, in its capacity as Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, has been given the mandate to serve as the coordinator of the group on lessons learned and best practices. That mandate was a response to the spirit of the resolutions of both the Security Council and General Assembly. In their twelfth preambular paragraphs, both Council resolution 1645 (2005) and Assembly resolution 60/180 state that "countries that have experienced recent post-conflict recovery would make valuable contributions to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission". The resolutions also set out the primary functions of the Peacebuilding Commission, among which we emphasize the need to develop integrated strategies

regarding peacebuilding processes so as to systematize successful experiences.

Countries that have in recent years made the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding have demonstrated the political will and capacity to unite various national forces in a new national effort for peace and development. However, those countries also tend to face a number of challenges simultaneously, including pressing demands from civil society and a lack of financial resources, which impede the implementation of projects and initiatives aimed at transforming a paper peace to a living peace.

Coherent efforts among various national actors have benefited from varied support initiatives by the United Nations. It is time that Member States became aware of all that, and that it be shared in an appropriate context, so as to promote future joint strategies and coordination on the ground with all agencies of the system and the mechanisms set up in the framework of the Economic and Social Council. Our work in coordinating the group on lessons learned entails bolstering institutional memory and compiling a set of lessons learned in order to strengthen future United Nations efforts in post-conflict processes.

It is true that each conflict has its own specificities, and the international community should respect the national character in carrying out post-conflict processes. Nevertheless, similarities emerge repeatedly. That points to the fact that such aspects as new forms of relationships between former adversaries, the reintegration of former combatants, the strengthening of institutions, judicial reform, public security, youth employment and the participation of women, among other factors, are prerequisites to laying the foundations of a new national endeavour. If those elements are not addressed, they can lead to an unexpected resurgence of violence.

We welcome the decision taken by the members of the Commission to establish the group on lessons learned. Above all, our work should be a source of inspiration and enrichment for the assistance provided to countries currently under consideration, namely, Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Allow me underscore the fact that this is not about duplicating efforts or generating additional budgetary implications. To the contrary: our contribution and open dialogue should be oriented towards priorities already identified by Burundi and Sierra Leone. To that end, we should rely on the participation of key protagonists in processes that can be considered successful. We should listen to civil society, private sector and political representatives, as well as to representatives of the United Nations system who played a key role in the post-conflict phase of a given country.

I should add that we also expect the Peacebuilding Commission to be able to incorporate into its collective memory instances in which populations, with the assistance of the United Nations, were able to move ahead, succeeded in agreeing on national priorities in order to live together in peace and decided to resolve their differences through dialogue. We believe that this is about active memory — which is to say, to remember in order to avert or rectify, or to repeat if the result of an action was positive. We also understand that our participation in the Peacebuilding Commission should chart a course that we can follow to develop and strengthen this new organ of the United Nations.

In conclusion, in my national capacity, allow me to emphasize some elements that seem especially important to us.

On 16 January, El Salvador will commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the signing of the Peace Accords. In 1992 the various parties to the armed conflict decided to sign the agreement in Chapultepec, Mexico. The United Nations assisted us throughout the negotiations, as well as during the verification and implementation of the Accords. To the satisfaction of Salvadorans, the Organization provided us with a sense of closure. At that time, the friends of the Secretary-General provided us with the necessary atmosphere and encouragement to continue to negotiate. Our participation in the Peacebuilding Commission today is, in a sense, a way to give back what we received when we most needed it.

The peacebuilding processes in Burundi and Sierra Leone have particular resonance for, and are of special interest to, my country, given that we experienced similar situations and faced similar uncertainty vis-à-vis resources. We understand that lasting peace can be maintained only if there is national will and ongoing effort by all. We also understand that, today more than ever, young people should find their own way in life and have new opportunities for employment and recreation.

Otherwise they themselves risk becoming a threat to domestic peace.

On the basis of lessons learned, our commitment as a country is to be part of the response to the new challenges to sustainable peace in the globalized world and to foster the hope that has been reborn in post-conflict societies because of the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, of which my country is honoured to be part.

Mr. Schiltz (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to welcome the holding of today's General Assembly debate. Luxembourg fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union.

When the fighting is over, the real struggle begins. It was to address that seemingly contradictory reality that, at the September 2005 World Summit, heads of State or Government called for the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. When the guns fall silent following an armed conflict and the hatchet is buried, a long-term battle begins against the fragility of the newfound peace. It is a battle to strengthen the physical safety of individuals and reconcile former enemies; to rehabilitate the institutions of the failing State, particularly the judicial system; and to rebuild infrastructures, provide basic social services and create an environment for new or renewed economic activity. This battle must be fought every day to assert the primacy of the rule of law over the barbarism of war. It must be fought to prevent the resurgence of violence, which is unworthy of human beings, because it deprives them of their most precious possession: life and the lives of their loved ones.

To win this battle, we must fight it together. The magnitude of the damage, the challenges and the problems is too enormous for us to have the capacity — or even the will — to tackle them alone or piecemeal. If the hope for a better life is to be reborn out of the ashes and rubble of conflict, we must stand together, reflect together about the way forward, agree on priorities, join forces and pool sufficient resources to attain the objectives we have set.

Given this challenge, together with the chance to make a fresh start, we would do well to recall the truth solemnly affirmed in the World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1): there can be no security without development and no development without security, and there can be neither without respect for human rights. That is particularly true in post-conflict situations; indeed, it is the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Hindsight permits me to observe that the international community has not allowed itself to be discouraged by the scope of this task. Rather, it seized the opportunity to establish the Commission, which will remain one of the all-too-rare outcomes of the Summit. Since its creation — provided for by two parallel General Assembly and Security Council resolutions — the Peacebuilding Commission has been equipped with its operational instruments: the Organizational Committee; the first country-specific meetings, on Burundi and Sierra Leone; and, extremely important, the Peacebuilding Fund.

My country, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, is proud to be able to participate in the work of the Commission. Both at the bilateral level and as a State member of the European Union, Luxembourg places the problems of managing conflict and post-conflict situations at the centre of its foreign policy, since we make broad use of multilateral instruments, chief among which is, of course, the United Nations.

In a broad and multidimensional approach to peacebuilding, important factors such as the processes of national reconciliation, resolving political, ethnic and religious conflicts, restoring effective and democratic public institutions, reforming the security sector, overhauling the judicial, police and penal systems and combating impunity — to name just a few — must be accorded their appropriate place, depending on the requirements of each situation.

Long active in the areas of development cooperation and humanitarian action, Luxembourg — which can announce that its official development assistance for 2007 will constitute 0.9 per cent of its gross national income — shares the concern of those who do not want to see the fruits of cooperation with partners from the developing world called into question by internal or subregional conflicts.

Every recourse to weapons is clearly a setback for development, dealing a harsh blow to populations, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable groups: women and children. I shall cite two examples. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire continues to cast a pall over the fragile economies of its neighbouring countries, a number of which are Luxembourg's cooperation partners.

Likewise, the recent armed incidents that have set the members of the Touareg minority in northern Mali against the Malian armed forces have considerably impeded the development of a region already greatly disadvantaged as a result of its landlocked status and climatic conditions. I would not venture to judge the motivations of either side; I would merely note that neither in the 1990s nor in 2006 did violence help to meet the people's most basic needs. On the other hand, the men and women of Kidal and the local authorities, as well as the Government of Mali, have found Luxembourg to be a reliable partner that truly understands the concept of the peace dividend. Thus, encouraged by the Algiers agreements, we have decided to considerably strengthen the financial package for the Kidal region and have implemented programmes to improve basic social services, to strengthen vocational training and integration and to support decentralization and shared peace governance.

It is that kind of experience, among other things, that Luxembourg intends to contribute to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission during our mandate. In that context, we have every confidence in the team put in place, under the guidance of Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie, whom we encourage to directly confront the organizational problems that never fail to appear whenever a new structure is set up. Guided by a concern for efficiency, flexibility and transparency, the Peacebuilding Support Office, which we envisaged as small in the General Assembly resolution, will be large in terms of its effectiveness and will provide valuable administrative and substantive services to the Commission's rotating members, in keeping with its mandate.

While we thank the United Nations Development Programme for having undertaken the actual management of the Peacebuilding Fund, it will be up to the Support Office to identify the funds available and the actors most directly concerned with a country-specific situation and then to gather information and unlock potential synergies, which are essential in formulating integrated intervention strategies.

In the area of development cooperation, on the basis of multiyear programmes with a limited number of partner countries, Luxembourg has for years been taking advantage of the experience and know-how of multilateral actors, particularly United Nations funds and programmes. We are actively involved in the governing boards of such funds and programmes, and the richness of the debates held there and the network of contacts established are definite assets in the integrated approach that we want our development effort to have. In that spirit, we hope that the exercise of "delivering as one United Nations" in developing countries will also be of benefit to the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office.

Finally, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission responds — unfortunately, we must admit — to a need that has been and continues to be deeply felt, since the resurgence of violence following a peace agreement must not be tolerated by the international community.

In more general terms, I would add that the need for more coherence and coordination in our efforts has never been as clearly set out as it has been in recent years. I would, for example, refer in particular to the adoption in March 2005 of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The timetable for its implementation will no doubt set the agenda in years to come.

Moreover, since the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus, there has been real awareness about the growing need for financing for development cooperation efforts, as well as for humanitarian efforts in the areas of rehabilitation and reconstruction. That awareness has been translated into genuine commitment on the part of the European Union. In May 2005, under the presidency of Luxembourg — to which I refer without false modesty — the 25 member States of the European Union committed themselves by 2015 to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to development cooperation. Those decisions, along with the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, signal a promising future approach. It is up to us to carry it out. It is up to us to invest energetically and with commitment in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Ms. Graham (New Zealand): It is my privilege to speak on behalf of the Governments of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand strongly support the Peacebuilding Commission and believe that it has a critical role to play in coordinating and integrating post-conflict peacebuilding activities. A strong Commission will move the international community past an ad hoc response to peacebuilding and on to a more coherent footing regarding what

needs to occur in a post-conflict setting to achieve lasting peace.

In the year since the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, in December 2005, good progress has been made in establishing that new institution, including determining representation on the Commission's Organizational Committee and in starting a dialogue to clarify the Commission's specific functions within the United Nations system. We were also pleased to see Burundi and Sierra Leone referred to the Commission by the Security Council in June 2006.

Despite that progress, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have been disappointed by the overemphasis placed on procedural matters by some members of the Commission, at the expense of substantive peacebuilding issues — the core mandate of the Commission. Canada, Australia and New Zealand urge the Commission to find new ways of working that befit the challenges before it, including working informally when possible in order to maximize progress during this formative phase, refocusing on its core mandate of advising United Nations organs on integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding, giving attention and resources to reconstruction and institution-building efforts and serving as a focused forum for political discussions related to war-to-peace transitions.

That mandate needs to be approached in an action-oriented and flexible manner, and should include the identification of results that can be realistically achieved. Canada, Australia and New Zealand also urge the Commission to develop modalities to ensure the active participation of civil society and other Governments in all areas of the Commission's work, as their input and participation are critical to the success of the peacebuilding process.

While we recognize that building peace is a long-term process, Canada, Australia and New Zealand continue to believe that the Peacebuilding Commission should focus on those cases where it can have the greatest and most transformative impact, and which can be viewed as immediate positive contributions to kick-start a longer-term peace process. Our Governments were very pleased to see the Peacebuilding Support Office undertake missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone to identify gaps in the peacebuilding process and areas where the Commission could have the highest impact. We were also pleased that the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone were subsequently able to identify key priorities for the Commission during its autumn sessions. Now that those two countries have been declared eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund, we are hopeful that there will be early disbursements — and early results from the investments made.

As Burundi and Sierra Leone make the transition from fragile post-conflict States towards lasting peace, international support remains critical for the consolidation of the gains made so far. Sustainable recovery and peace cannot be achieved without addressing a country's needs in the political, social and economic spheres, or without addressing the interlinkages among them. The Governments of Canada, Australia and New Zealand were therefore pleased to see that the December sessions of the Peacebuilding Commission identified several cross-cutting themes, including support for political dialogue for Burundi and the strengthening of democratic governance and gender mainstreaming for Sierra Leone. Canada, Australia and New Zealand view that as very important work to ensure that whatever activities are undertaken by the Commission do not duplicate efforts already under way, and that they meaningfully advance international coordination to ensure a positive contribution to the peacebuilding process.

While better coordination of the donor community and the international financial institutions is a key objective for the Peacebuilding Commission, Canada, Australia and New Zealand view the Commission's work as constituting more than just a venue to pledge assistance. We are hopeful that the work that the Commission is doing in relation to the national peacebuilding strategies of Sierra Leone and Burundi will begin to build the basis of expertise for the integrated identification and addressing of thematic areas that require attention in all post-conflict peacebuilding situations.

As Assistant Secretary-General McAskie has pointed out, that task will require a new investment of intellectual capital aimed at developing a strategic peacebuilding framework. Needless to say, the Peacebuilding Commission is unlikely to achieve its full potential until we are able to articulate that basic vision of the body's objectives and output. That will require that issues pertaining to security sector and justice sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration, gender equality, children and armed conflict and refugees and internally displaced persons all be taken up on a thematic basis, both within the Organizational Committee and in country-specific meetings.

In that regard, we were particularly encouraged when, at the first country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone, the Commission reaffirmed the centrality of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security, for the implementation of peacebuilding strategies. That work needs to be expanded to other areas of cross-cutting significance as the Commission seeks to design a strategic framework against which the Commission can frame its advice and its interventions.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a vital component of the wider United Nations reform agenda. The transition from war to peace requires comprehensive concerted efforts to prevent a relapse to violence. We look forward to working with the Commission in the coming months and years as it seeks to clarify its role and to make a positive contribution to the very important task of building durable peace in countries emerging from conflict.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Madam President, my delegation's appreciation for responding positively to the request of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that a debate be held on post-conflict peacebuilding following the open debate held in the Security Council.

The delegation of Egypt associates itself fully with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and expresses its appreciation for the briefings given by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, by the Vice-Chairs of the Commission in their respective capacities as Chair of the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Chair of the Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned, and by the Chair of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone.

Experience shows that peacebuilding, in a broad sense, must be considered from a multidimensional perspective that goes beyond threats to international peace and security to include the economic and social aspects of the process. Lessons learned highlight the urgent need to bridge gaps in the transition between the peacekeeping and peacebuilding stages by ensuring that international support is provided when peacekeeping mandates expire so as to reinforce national reconciliation efforts and sustain reconstruction strategies and plans, thereby preventing States from relapsing into conflict.

The main purpose of the adoption by the Security Council and the General Assembly of parallel resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission was to ensure the international community's continued engagement in the resolution of conflict situations — through the involvement of the Security Council, when such situations constitute threats to international peace and security, and of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their relevant subsidiary bodies. This would enable them to deal effectively and in an integrated manner with the post-conflict phase — with its economic, social and humanitarian aspects that are directly linked to the requirements for development and peacebuilding in those States — with the support of the international financial institutions, donor countries and other active parties.

Despite the relative progress achieved by the Peacebuilding Commission on the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, several organizational aspects still need to be resolved, especially given the lack of precedents. The past six months have exposed differences among members of the Commission on certain issues, but they have also shown that there are certain common views that need to be crystallized. They have also highlighted the urgent need to ensure balance in the relationship between the Commission and the principal organs, each of which has its own prerogatives as set out in the Charter. There is thus a need to continue the serious dialogue that recently began within the Organizational Committee with a view to establishing a clear programme of work that provides a firm foundation for the Commission's activities.

The General Assembly is the organ charged with responsibility for dealing with such issues — not only because universal representation makes it the main and most democratic organ within the United Nations but also because it is responsible for following up on and assessing the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and for providing and reviewing policy guidance in accordance with the resolutions establishing the Commission. Thus, the General Assembly must have more scope to request advice from the Peacebuilding

Commission. It must be able to do so even when a situation is on the agenda of the Security Council, on the basis of other, related, agenda items already under consideration in the General Assembly.

That does not, however, mean that there will be no need to improve the rules of procedure, as might be required over time as the Commission carries out its activities. We must take a gradual and flexible approach to improving the rules of procedure; too many details would slow down the functioning of the Commission. The rules of procedure of the General Assembly must apply in cases where the rules of procedure of the Peacebuilding Commission fall short.

We must pay due attention to the concepts of transparency and accountability within the Commission, based on the responsibility of all of its members, without discrimination between donor and non-donor countries, to achieve the objectives that they were elected or appointed to realize. We must also make sure that the Peacebuilding Support Office is accountable only to the Commission and not to any other organ.

We must promote the role of the Organizational Committee in following up and assessing objectively the policies and activities carried out within the framework of the country-specific configurations. Hence, it is important to arrange field visits, coordinated with various national activities and with the consent of the States concerned, in order to determine the size of the country financial envelopes required. We must also make sure that, following their determination by the Commission, those envelopes are speedily delivered to support approved national plans, in order to strengthen efforts to re-establish peace and stability.

In order to ensure that the necessary financial resources are readily available, the Organizational Committee must review the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund and provide general policy guidance. This is particularly important with respect to the Secretary-General's nomination of the members of the independent advisory group responsible for providing advice and oversight regarding the appropriateness of Fund allocations and examining its administrative and financial performance. They should then be appointed by the Organizational Committee on the basis of equitable geographical distribution.

Finally, we must ensure that the advisory role of the Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office in assisting national Governments to formulate their peacebuilding strategies does not lead to a new form of trusteeship. Furthermore, the Commission, in deciding on contributions to be disbursed through the Peacebuilding Fund to give an initial boost to urgent projects, should not be transformed into a mere broker, bringing together donor and recipient countries under the supervision of the Secretary-General. Moreover, while we support the participation of civil society in States emerging from conflict, we must ensure that the intergovernmental nature of the Commission is not overlooked. Civil society organizations and the private sector must be able to express their views in a manner consistent with agreed rules on the inclusion of such organizations in United Nations activities.

Those are some of the important substantive and procedural issues that have arisen over the past six months and that must be tackled. Egypt hopes that we will be able to benefit from the experiences with Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first two cases before the Commission. We hope that every effort will be made to reinforce the foundations of peace in those two States so that their expectations of the Peacebuilding Commission can be met and in order to help their peoples to fulfil their aspirations for development and prosperity. We also hope that this will enable us to better deal with other cases in the future. Yesterday's informal joint meeting on Burundi and Sierra Leone was an important step in the right direction, both substantively and procedurally, and we hope that it will facilitate the Peacebuilding Commission's achievement of its objectives.

Mr. Maqungo (South Africa): I would like to begin by associating myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

When the 2005 World Summit called for the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, it was in the realization that countries emerging from conflict did not have a forum within the United Nations system dedicated to their plight. For example, a country caught up in conflict could count on the Security Council to assist it with peacekeeping, and a country that had long since emerged from conflict could rely on the Economic and Social Council or even the General Assembly to help attract development projects. But for a country that had just emerged from bitter conflict, the

chance of falling between the cracks was very real before the Peacebuilding Commission was created.

It is for that reason that, in accordance with the resolutions establishing it, the Peacebuilding Commission is expected to have a direct impact on the lives of people in the countries on its agenda. Country ownership of Peacebuilding Commission strategies is a necessary ingredient for long-term success.

Therefore, the Peacebuilding Commission should have firsthand knowledge about the role-players on the ground that are promoting post-conflict recovery in a country emerging from conflict, since the Commission is best placed to enhance coordination and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

It is expected that in June 2007, or shortly thereafter, the General Assembly will review the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as mandated by resolution 60/180. It would be helpful at that time if the Commission were to present a report that also contained the lessons learned from Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first two countries on the Commission's agenda.

One of the Commission's strengths is that it can organize emergency resources, which are often the glue that keeps countries from sliding back into conflict. But the fact that the Peacebuilding Commission can raise seed money does not make it a donor agency.

According to operative paragraph 2 of resolution 60/180, which created the Commission, its primary role is:

> "(a) To bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
>
> "(b) To focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development;
>
> "(c) to provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery".

In conclusion, my delegation believes that there are some operational goals that the Peacebuilding Commission should set for itself if it is to become effective. Among those is ensuring that countries emerging from conflict have full ownership of the peacebuilding process for the benefit of their people. Another is to make certain that the Commission develops rules of procedure that are permanent and predictable. It should be clear to everyone what the Commission is about and what it can and cannot do.

The Peacebuilding Commission is extremely important to the lives of peoples in countries that are emerging from conflict. We agree with the Non-Aligned Movement that the Commission should consider, as a matter of urgency, undertaking field missions to Freetown and Bujumbura in order to evaluate the situation on the ground and to exchange information with Government authorities, civil society and other key stakeholders. We also concur that field missions should be an integral tool of the Peacebuilding Commission. Otherwise, the New York meetings are not going to make a great difference in the lives of people in Freetown or Bujumbura, who are supposed to be the direct beneficiaries of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Soler Torrijos (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you for having responded to the suggestion of the Non-Aligned Movement to convene this important meeting in order to engage in a preliminary analysis of the work done so far by the Peacebuilding Commission. Likewise, we endorse the statement made earlier by the delegation of Jamaica on behalf of the Movement.

We feel certain that this meeting, like the one held a few days ago in the Security Council, will serve to strengthen and provide guidance to the Commission in the important work entrusted to it by the heads of State or Government when they established the Commission at the 2005 Summit.

With regard to the topic under consideration, Panama today is in a very particular situation. That is because Panama is currently a non-permanent member of the Security Council and has been designated by the latter as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission. But, above all, Panama is also a member of the General

Assembly and a founding Member of the United Nations. This situation enables us to analyse with particular objectivity the complex structure of the Peacebuilding Commission and its links to the other organs of the United Nations.

The Peacebuilding Commission was established by the heads of State or Government at the 2005 Summit in order to assist countries that are emerging, or about to emerge, from conflict situations in order to put an end to hostilities and then to embark on the road to recovery. However, putting an end to hostilities and launching a process of recovery both require time. In other words, these are processes, not events.

In any case, in order for the Organization to assist a given country to emerge from conflict and to achieve lasting peace, joint and coordinated efforts will be required on the part of the Peacebuilding Commission on the one hand and the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the other. This is clear from the mandate created at the 2005 Summit and from the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions aimed at its implementation.

With regard to the structure and functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission, we believe that there are a few concepts that must be better defined. That task is primarily the responsibility of the Commission's Organizational Committee, but the General Assembly can also make a useful contribution.

I wish to refer in particular to the mandate of the Commission and to the principle that the peacebuilding process is the responsibility of the country concerned, something that has become known as country ownership.

With respect to the mandate of the Commission, resolution 60/180 states that the Commission must operate as an intergovernmental advisory body. However, in Panama's view, for the Commission fully to discharge the mission entrusted to it by the General Assembly, it will have to carry out functions that go beyond a purely advisory role.

For that reason, in our view, the mandate of the Commission should be viewed flexibly, so as to avoid needless bureaucracy and disagreements that would only detract from our principal task: achieving lasting peace in countries emerging from conflict situations.

With regard to country ownership, the situation is somewhat more complex, since there are risks involved in its implementation that we need to be aware of, address and overcome.

In any case, the delegation of Panama believes that country ownership does not necessarily mean that the country whose situation is being considered by the Peacebuilding Commission can itself adopt and implement the policies, programmes and institutions that it may see as most appropriate to its recovery. For us, country ownership means that the country whose situation — including its political, social and economic forces — is being considered by the Commission will have to agree with the Commission and adopt as its own a plan for the establishment and implementation of policies, programmes and institutions required in order to embark on the road to recovery, reconstruction and development.

The Peacebuilding Commission is not just a step in the right direction towards fulfilling the purposes of the Charter. It can also serve as a catalyst to ensure that the various principal organs of the United Nations act in a joint and coherent manner, as parts of a whole, as was envisaged by its founding Members.

Mr. Sen (India): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to you, Madam President, for scheduling this discussion on an important subject at such short notice. We also thank you, as well as the President of the Security Council, the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Chairs of its country-specific configurations and the Chair of its Working Group on Lessons Learned, for the important statements made and for the very important work that they have undertaken. We also wish to thank you, Madam President, for your decision to write to potential donors to seek further contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund in order to ensure that the funding target is met. As a contributor to the Fund, we welcome your support for it.

I should also like to express our appreciation to the delegation of Jamaica, coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus within the Peacebuilding Commission, for its diligence and for its statement today, with which we align ourselves.

While the statement made by our colleague and friend from Jamaica eloquently encapsulates the collective position of the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue, I would like to very briefly explore a few

ideas and to make a few suggestions in our national capacity with a view to encouraging some introspection.

To start with, it has been of concern to us that, since the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission last year, we have spent a considerable amount of time on housekeeping issues. Initially, when we were collectively engaged in defining what this body would do and how it would go about achieving its goals, that may have been a valid exercise. However, at this stage, I submit that we cannot continue indefinitely discussing preliminary issues such as reporting responsibilities, participation and operational matters to the detriment of the larger goal of assisting in the consolidation of peace in post-conflict societies. To do so would be to miss the wood for the trees.

Secondly, in terms of procedure and priority, we accept the premise that the country-specific meetings are a crucial element in ensuring that assistance and advice are speedily and effectively administered to candidate countries. However, it is difficult to accept that this process mechanism takes precedence over the Organizational Committee, which is the steering mechanism of the Peacebuilding Commission. But we recognize that there are alternative views on that subject. Therefore, perhaps we should not ask ourselves which takes precedence. Instead, let us ask ourselves a more practical question: how the work of the Organizational Committee and the country-specific configurations can be harmonized and made more complementary.

In a similar vein, we believe that the success of the Commission is critically dependent on a harmonious and effective Organizational Committee. To reiterate the metaphor of steering, if 31 pilots argue over a ship's steering wheel, the ship will only run aground. It is therefore our view that we need to change the nature of the discourse within the Organizational Committee. To some extent, that can be addressed if there is a larger sense of overarching purpose in its meetings. But, above and beyond that, we need to find ways to increase mutual trust — to begin with, by creating a more collegial and consultative approach. The Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Secretariat and, indeed, each of the member States on the Organizational Committee share a responsibility to do so.

We do not believe that such a broad understanding will be difficult to reach. The statements made last week by a number of partners in the peacebuilding process reflect a belief in the existence of common ground. In our view, that common ground lies in recognizing that the goal is to assist candidate countries with funding, to mobilize donor support and to design policies that will consolidate peace. The painful history of the post-world-war years illustrates the fragility of peace in post-conflict societies. Here, Nietzsche has sometimes been proved right: peace is an interregnum between two periods of war. Therefore, all of us also emphasize the need for expeditious action.

Consequently, we hold that it is self-evident that the Peacebuilding Commission is not merely about donors of money and recipients, but also about the provision of advice and policy support, both through learning by example and through assistance in designing policies based on the specificities of the society concerned. On the one hand, to really contribute fundamentally and to be truly relevant, the Peacebuilding Commission will have to examine in depth and provide advice on today's most urgent problems, such as how to promote some understanding among a country's regional and ethnic leaders and assess the pace of, say, economic reform or elections, which, if embarked on too early or at the wrong time, may actually retard institution-building and plunge a country back into civil war. On the other hand, one size clearly does not fit all, and what works in a small and more homogeneous country may not work in a large and fractured State. Above all, it is important to focus on whether resources are going to the most important task: institution-building.

We also believe that there is no gainsaying the fact that the lead actor in any post-conflict peacebuilding situation must be the nation concerned. While we welcome inputs from all sections of society, both nationally and internationally, the primary focus cannot but be to strengthen the capacity of a post-conflict State to govern effectively and to mobilize human and material resources to achieve development. Every other perspective that is provided is useful, but we should also recognize that a non-national perspective can only be segmental. Useful though they may be, such perspectives can reflect only part of the picture. The appropriate image, therefore, is a circle whose circumference may run through and encompass many countries, but whose centre is in one country.

That brings me to my final point. We believe that we need to renew our focus and our commitment to the larger cause of assisting the candidate countries that are before us. We need to listen more closely to their concerns and to react with greater dispatch to their requests. If we do so in a manner that most directly addresses their concerns, we will not only be able to assist the States concerned in the process of post-conflict peace consolidation, but will also have demonstrated the efficacy of the new mechanism that is the Peacebuilding Commission. That will have beneficial effects ranging from a more results-oriented discourse within the Commission to greater donor willingness not only to assist the candidate countries themselves, but also to fund the Commission.

To summarize: it is our view that the teething troubles of which we are wont to speak can be addressed once we have placed before ourselves the larger picture and the overarching goal. Once we have done so, the debates over what are, in the final analysis, only minutiae will recede into the background. It is only then that the Peacebuilding Commission will come into its own. It is our hope that, with the rapid acceleration of the Commission's work in the coming months, all of us will be able to return to the Assembly on the first anniversary of the establishment of the Commission with a more optimistic report card and in a more forward-looking frame of mind.

Ms. Barbosa (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico thanks you, Madam President, for convening this meeting to discuss the progress made thus far by one of the two youngest organs of the United Nations system. Our deliberations are taking place at a very opportune time as the process of defining the Peacebuilding Commission continues. We are certain that the profit we gain from this exercise, together with the set of proposals put forward in the Security Council last week, will contribute to that process. Let us take advantage of this opportunity to reflect on the future of the Commission.

My delegation expresses its thanks for the work being done by Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola, as Chairman of the Organizational Committee. We also congratulate Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie of the Peacebuilding Support Office on the efforts that she has made in an unprecedented endeavour.

The delegation of Mexico wishes to make five observations regarding the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and its performance over the less than one year of its existence.

First, my Government believes that the Commission has been established as a test of multilateralism, and specifically of the United Nations. Together with the Human Rights Council, it is one of the most tangible outcomes of the 2005 World Summit and of the Organization's reform process. The expectations within and outside this House are therefore immense. The eyes and the confidence of the international community are focused on what the Commission might produce. We believe that if it yields positive results in an area as neglected as post-conflict peacebuilding, the multilateral system will not only have prevailed, but will also have gained greater political capital with which to make progress on the remaining items on the reform agenda. The combined political will that made it possible to adopt General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005) must not be lost. The Commission is thus facing no less a challenge.

But there is a second challenge of vital importance. It is known to all that the contribution of the United Nations to reducing civil conflicts has been very significant. Nevertheless, and despite its best intentions, the Organization has failed to prevent recurrence of conflicts and to establish political and functional institutions in societies devastated by internal wars. The efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission should be centred on filling this institutional vacuum and repairing the historical record.

Secondly, the debate that took place last week in the Security Council reiterated that the Commission's mandate is vague. As pointed out by the Permanent Representative of South Africa, it would appear that the Commission "means different things to different people". Several delegations presented a plethora of contributions regarding what the Commission should or should not do. That set of proposals needs to be studied by the Organizational Committee, but mainly by this General Assembly — the universal forum to which the Peacebuilding Commission will periodically render account.

My delegation joined in the consensus on resolution 60/180 because, inter alia, we believed that

in relation to the other principal organs of the United Nations, the Peacebuilding Commission would operate on the basis of the principle of complementarity with regard to the responsibilities that each of those organs has. We firmly believe that the Commission has an authority that is clearly set out and that should not be encroached upon either by the Security Council or by any other organ. Likewise, we are aware of the need to ensure that work in the Commission proceeds with attention to coherence in the system in order to avoid duplication and to optimize the resources available to us.

Thirdly, Mexico is convinced that the decisions and the direction the Commission takes should be guided by three principal purposes. On the one hand, we believe that any advice with regard to national cases should be provided on the basis of an integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding. Defining the phases through which a country goes when it emerges from war is increasingly complex. Some cases have shown that efforts at disarmament, demobilization and reintegration need to be carried out in tandem with tasks linked to construction of institutions or the promotion of programmes to foster a culture of human rights. The threats that give rise to recurrence of conflict can remain hidden in various ways — socially, politically or in terms of development. The concept of peacebuilding is one of the few in which the link between security, development, the rule of law and human rights is entirely clear and increasingly relevant.

Mexico believes that the Commission will be able to work hand in hand with the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group established by the Secretary-General, on the basis of the report presented to us in December 2006 (A/61/636).

On the other hand, we feel it advisable to recall that there is not a single model for peacebuilding. Each national case is unique; each history is a war with its own causes. It is possible to draw parallels based on past experience. In that regard, Mexico welcomes the decision to form a working group on lessons learned. We believe such lessons should be compiled and disseminated appropriately. Nevertheless, it will be fundamental that each national case be treated with the specific focus it deserves, and in situations in which a national authority exists it should be empowered throughout all phases of the design and implementation of the peacebuilding strategy. It will be difficult for a sense of nationhood to emerge in a country where decisions are being artificially imposed.

Mexico believes that without clarity of purposes and priorities, it will not be possible to qualify the work of the Peacebuilding Commission as a success or a failure. One of the goals of the Commission is to serve as a bridge between the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, donors, civil society and regional actors. Nevertheless, in my delegation's view, that goal will not be reached effectively if the Commission fails in to promote a common vision among all the actors as to the way in which peace needs to be consolidated.

Fourthly, we welcome the announcement on 29 October by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the contribution of $35 million to the Peacebuilding Fund. Mexico considers that the Commission and the Fund are in a symbiotic relationship. We are aware that sustainable commitment is required of all donors to guarantee resources that will be available when they are needed. Without mobilization and availability of adequate resources from the Fund, the Commission will not be able to fulfil its mandate with the efficiency that we all — especially civilians in the field — expect.

Fifthly, to use an English term that explains the present status of the Commission, my delegation believes that we have before us now a "work in progress". There are more that a handful of highly complex matters yet to be defined, but there seems to be a consensus on several procedural matters that could be amended as of now, in the initial months in the life of the Commission, so that something that emerges unintentionally does not become the rule rather than the exception.

For example, Mexico reiterates the need for the Commission to function on the basis of well-defined rules of procedure. Let us avoid what happened with the rules of procedure of the Security Council — something originally conceived of as provisional has continued to exist for 61 years. The legitimacy and credibility of the Peacebuilding Commission will in large measure depend on whether we build a new organ that operates with the greatest possible transparency. We propose that the meetings of the Organizational Committee be conducted openly and publicly to ensure that States not members at a given moment but that do

participate in its creation in the Assembly will be aware of its progress at first hand.

In addition, my delegation again urges other Member States to focus their energies on ensuring greater and better monitoring of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, especially with regard to the membership of future committees of the Organization.

We are optimistic about the contribution that the Peacebuilding Commission can make. It is time to maintain a proactive and innovative attitude when facing post-conflict situations under the Commission's consideration. The institutional vacuum that motivated the creation of the Commission will be filled only if Member States endow it with the tools and resources necessary to fulfil its mandate. Let us not fail to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, an opportunity again being given to the multilateral system. We are in time to do this.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): My delegation wishes to thank you, Madam President, for your timely initiative in convening this important meeting. The Peacebuilding Commission is a major achievement of the ongoing reform of the United Nations, and as such, expectations of it are high. We Member States collectively shoulder the responsibility for ensuring that the Commission achieves its full potential. This meeting, together with last week's open debate in the Security Council, is an excellent opportunity for us to take stock of the progress that has been made and to set the course for the next stage.

The Peacebuilding Commission was established as an intergovernmental advisory body to fill the gap in the area of peacebuilding in the United Nations system. It should therefore address issues that encompass the mandates of the principal organs as well as the other various entities within that system. To make the Commission a success, it is essential that all of these components work together harmoniously. To this end, we must improve dialogue and coordination both in New York and on the ground. My delegation has advocated this point and made several suggestions.

The Peacebuilding Commission has made steady progress thus far. It has successfully identified priority areas for the countries in question and has put consultation mechanisms into operation. We too welcome the recent announcement by the Secretary-General on the first allocation under the Peacebuilding Fund of $35 million for Burundi, and we hope a similar announcement for Sierra Leone will be made shortly. These initial outlays will surely serve as a catalyst for filling critical local needs that would not otherwise be met, as well as for marshalling additional resources.

The Peacebuilding Commission was established to help prevent relapse into conflict by making a difference on the ground. The Commission is now entering a critical phase, in which it must demonstrate tangible achievements in the two countries under consideration. The Commission's strength lies in its action-oriented recommendations. In the light of that, my delegation believes that the Commission must focus on creating an integrated peacebuilding strategy for each country through extensive consultations in the country-specific meetings over the coming months. The Commission also needs to specify more focused target areas within the priorities identified in order to ensure that those strategies are action-oriented in that regard.

We believe that institution-building and human security are two important dimensions of peacebuilding. Those two elements should be fully taken into account in formulating focused target areas. Here are some suggestions for enhancing the creation and implementation of the strategy.

First of all, strong national ownership is essential. A peacebuilding strategy can be valuable only if the country in question demonstrates the will to formulate and implement it. We are pleased to see the active and constructive involvement of Burundi and Sierra Leone, and we commend their swift responses to the Commission's recommendations. We look forward to their continued commitment to peace and reconstruction.

Secondly, a peacebuilding strategy should represent all relevant stakeholders. Peacebuilding is by nature a multifaceted and multilayered undertaking involving all stakeholders, working together in areas such as peace and security, development and human rights. In the light of that, my delegation remains committed to ensuring full and active participation by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in all meetings, including those of the Organizational Committee. It is also important to establish a modality for securing effective participation by civil society and non-governmental organizations in the work of the

Commission, in particular the country-specific meetings, at which they can make valuable contributions.

In that regard, the establishment of an on-the-ground coordination and monitoring mechanism would contribute significantly to the implementation of the strategy. As I stated in the Security Council debate (see S/PV.5627), the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board in Afghanistan, which involves all relevant stakeholders, could serve as a successful model. We should consider tailoring that model to the specific needs of each country in question as appropriate.

Thirdly, we should be flexible enough to learn from the experiences of countries that have recovered from conflict. We strongly encourage such countries to share their experiences in the next stage of our consultations. In view of that, we appreciate El Salvador's initiative in establishing a Working Group to take stock of lessons learned in that country. My delegation will participate actively in the Group.

Before concluding, I shall now turn briefly to some organizational matters both inside and outside the Peacebuilding Commission. Enhancing the synergy and interaction between the General Assembly and the Commission is critical. We suggest that the President of the General Assembly and the Chair of the Commission have regular meetings to discuss pressing issues. In addition, the Chair of the Commission and/or the Chairs of the country-specific meetings should make timely written reports to the General Assembly on the deliberations, as appropriate.

The founding resolution gives to the General Assembly the task of reviewing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Assembly will accomplish that through a yearly debate on the Commission's annual report. The Assembly's role is important in both substantive and organizational terms, particularly during the "teething stage" of the Commission. We look forward to a critical and constructive review and hope that the General Assembly makes useful recommendations to the Commission as appropriate.

We are very much encouraged by recent efforts to institutionalize the Peacebuilding Commission. In particular, we appreciate the long-awaited proposal of work plans for the country-specific meetings. The work plans clearly provide much-needed predictability to our work. My delegation fully supports the basic framework of the work plans. The recent staff additions to the Peacebuilding Support Office will enable it to provide the support necessary to make them operational.

In conclusion, I would like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, and to Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, Chairmen of the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone, respectively, for their valuable contributions. I wish to reaffirm Japan's firm commitment to contributing to the Commission, particularly at this critical juncture. I am also very pleased to announce that Japan will hold a seminar on peacebuilding in Timor-Leste in Tokyo this March. I hope that the Commission and the General Assembly will further advance the deliberations on the issues that we have discussed today.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan expresses its gratitude to you, Madam President, for having convened this debate on the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission at such short notice. We also welcome the opportunity to participate in it.

Pakistan supports the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission at the 2005 World Summit was a landmark achievement in the United Nations reform process. The Commission is structurally capable of promoting a comprehensive and coherent system-wide approach to the complex task of peacebuilding. By design, the new body was meant to be innovative and flexible.

The Commission is still in its formative phase and is evolving and developing. It would, of course, be incorrect to assert that the Commission has accomplished very little. We have done a great deal and continue to achieve further progress while we learn in parallel. The Commission needs to clarify and chart the trajectory of its future work in the coming months.

In that context, the Commission faces two categories of issues: first, problems relating to organization and process; and secondly, problems relating to its substantive work.

In the first category, three major issues need to be resolved in the near future. The first is the lack of clarity regarding the relationship of the Peacebuilding Commission with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Paragraph 15 of resolution 60/180 provides some clarity on the relationship between the Commission and the Assembly through its decision that the Commission shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly, which shall hold an annual debate to review the report.

However, such clarity is largely absent as regards the Commission's relationship with the Economic and Social Council. There are some vast areas in which the Commission needs to interact with the Economic and Social Council — for instance, debt relief, capacity-building, governance, the strengthening of democracy, economic recovery, budgetary support and youth unemployment. All of those issues are within the purview of the Economic and Social Council. The Commission should therefore devise an institutional mechanism to utilize the Economic and Social Council's Charter role and responsibilities.

The relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council is, of course, clearer. Two situations — those in Burundi and Sierra Leone — have been put on the agenda of the Commission in response to the Council's request for advice. However, the relationship between the Commission and the Council should be interactive.

It would be useful to evoke responses from the Security Council to some general questions. How, for example, is the advice given by the Peacebuilding Commission being utilized? How could it be best utilized by the Council? Have the Peacebuilding Commission's deliberations influenced the Council's decisions on the two issues on the Commission's agenda? How could the Council's interaction with the Commission be improved? Is the interface of the seven Council members in the Commission sufficient, or is there a need for wider consultations between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council? Another organizational issue relates to modalities for the participation of civil society groups and non-governmental organizations. These should be flexibly resolved, bearing in mind the Commission's essentially intergovernmental character.

Thirdly, there have been efforts to downplay the position and role of the Organizational Committee. That is most unfortunate. While there is a general understanding that most of the Peacebuilding Commission's work will be done in country-specific formats, it is evident that there are issues — especially general or systemic issues — which can be discussed only in the Organizational Committee. The Committee should also have an oversight role in the work of the country-specific groups. Furthermore, the interaction of the Peacebuilding Commission with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, as well as with other institutional actors, should be coordinated and conducted by the Organizational Committee, which needs to meet more frequently and regularly.

On the substantive aspects of the Commission's work, it is still in the process of learning by doing. Despite difficulties and constraints, the Peacebuilding Commission, which held its first country-specific meetings only three months ago, has embarked on some serious work. The preparations for and the quality and scope of discussions in the country-specific meetings have progressively improved. Key priorities have been identified and work plans are now being prepared, with corresponding timelines for actions to be undertaken by various actors on those activities.

With a view to further improving the substantive work of the Commission, Pakistan would like to make a number of proposals.

First, there should be better planning of and preparation for the country-specific meetings.

Second, in our view, since we have United Nations integrated offices in both countries to support peace consolidation, the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of those offices should be substantially discussed in the Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission should not become merely another donor-recipient forum; the contributions of other members — for example, troop-contributing countries, as well as those with experience of post-conflict reconstruction — ought to be welcomed and reflected in the Commission's conclusions.

Third, there should be greater emphasis on the elaboration and implementation of integrated national plans by the authorities of the country concerned.

Fourth, there is also a need to harmonize the Commission's work in identifying the key peacebuilding priorities for the countries on its agenda, with the broader objective of pursuing integrated peacebuilding strategies in respect of those countries.

Fifth, there is a need for clearer identification of the gaps in the implementation of integrated national plans and relevant actors that can help to bridge such gaps.

Sixth, there are other pressing issues, such as security sector reform, economic reform, rebuilding damaged or destroyed infrastructure and human resources investment, which all require funding and technical support, technology transfer and expert advice. These are substantive areas in which the Peacebuilding Commission could make important contributions by defining the problem areas and identifying the actors and modalities to respond to them.

Seventh, the sharing of information should be improved substantially, especially with the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda, Commission members and stakeholders.

Finally, one of the key areas of attention for the Commission should be the mobilization of resources. The Peacebuilding Fund is a good option to meet immediate and pressing requirements. The timely replenishment of the Fund should be ensured. However, it is also essential to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission is able to marshal and sustain adequate resources for implementing agreed objectives, plans and programmes in the concerned countries. All possible mechanisms should be deployed for that purpose, including donor conferences.

We must all be clear about the rationale for the creation and existence of the Peacebuilding Commission. It is, first, its capacity to adopt a comprehensive approach to all issues of peacebuilding. Secondly, it is the capacity to promote complementarity and synergetic actions at three levels — between the national Government or authority and the international community; between the United Nations system and all other actors involved, including the Bretton Woods institutions; and among the three principal organs of the United Nations: the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

Mr. Idoko (Nigeria): Six months is traditionally considered to be a long time in the life of any organization or administration. The Nigerian delegation therefore welcomes this debate, which — like the one held in the Security Council on 31 January — provides the opportunity for Member States to take stock and exchange views on the progress made by the Peacebuilding Commission since its establishment by the General Assembly.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, His Excellency Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I should also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Nigeria's confidence in the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, and the other members of the Bureau of the Organizational Committee. In addition, I wish to pay tribute to Norway and the Netherlands — Chairs of the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone, respectively — for their commitment. In the same vein, we commend the Peacebuilding Support Office for its dedication and hard work.

Nigeria is well aware of the teething problems centring on procedural issues which had tended to slow down the work of the Commission. I am delighted to note, however, that the Commission has largely overcome those initial hiccups and that it is now poised to deliver on the objectives envisaged by our leaders in September 2005. The Organizational Committee has had a number of fruitful meetings. It successfully organized two country-specific meetings on Burundi and two on Sierra Leone, which proved very rewarding in terms of bringing together important actors associated with peacebuilding efforts in the two countries. In addition, the two meetings were able to identify and agree on the priority needs of the two countries. The Governments of the two countries have since assumed ownership of the identified priority needs. Furthermore, as a result of those meetings, funds have already been approved for Burundi. We are optimistic that very soon the funds for Sierra Leone will be announced.

Fears have been expressed that the dual parentage that the Peacebuilding Commission enjoys in the General Assembly and the Security Council could become a liability rather than an asset because of possible conflict or competition between the two organs. On the contrary, Nigeria believes that the

combined support of the General Assembly and the Security Council is necessary for the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Commission and that it should be exploited for the overall benefit of the Commission.

For millions of people in countries emerging from conflict, the Peacebuilding Commission represents a beacon of hope and a source of succour in their lives. In this regard, Burundi and Sierra Leone will be seen as a test case for the success or failure of the Commission. Many countries that need the assistance of the Peacebuilding Commission are eagerly waiting to be considered. It is therefore imperative that we give the Commission maximum support and assistance so that it can deliver on its mandate.

As the Commission enters the crucial stage of its first year, we would like to draw attention to some aspects of its work which Nigeria believes are capable of consolidating the gains and experience of the past months. Bearing in mind the fact that country-specific meetings are the best forum for bringing the Commission closer to the beneficiaries of the work of the Commission, we would encourage the Commission to interact more with the relevant actors on the ground. We would also like the Organizational Committee to meet more regularly to ensure that the decisions taken are promptly pursued. In the same vein, it would be highly beneficial for the Peacebuilding Commission to devote more time to resource mobilization. Furthermore, we believe that members of the Commission should undertake visits to countries under consideration in order to reassure the affected countries of the commitment of the international community. Finally, the Commission should be results-oriented, especially given that its success will be measured in terms of the difference it makes to the lives of peoples in countries emerging from conflict.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): It is my great pleasure to speak on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation in this debate on the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. My delegation sees this plenary meeting as a good opportunity to review the recent work done by the Commission and to set out future guidelines.

We wish to align ourselves with the statement made earlier by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The world community has been grappling with a number of unresolved problems in its arduous quest for durable peace, stability and development. Despite the tireless efforts made by the United Nations to achieve its noble goals as enshrined in the Charter, conflicts have continued to escalate in various regions in the world, with devastating consequences for millions of innocent civilians. As a result, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding operations are becoming increasingly massive and complex, placing unprecedented burdens on the United Nations given the Organization's strained resources.

Against that backdrop, the 2005 World Summit gave rise to hope that more efficient ways would be found to sustainably assist conflict-stricken States in achieving lasting peace and development and preventing them from relapsing into deadly strife. In that regard, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and its Support Office and Fund not only reinvigorates United Nations reform but also creates instruments that are more unified in order to oversee and carry out peacebuilding activities worldwide.

The Vietnamese delegation wishes to commend the recent efforts undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission in the light of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions 60/180 and 1645 (2005), respectively. We note with satisfaction that Sierra Leone and Burundi, the first countries supported by the Commission, have made remarkable progress in their national reconstruction and rehabilitation, and we hope that more country-specific meetings will be convened, in a timely manner, to help address critical issues in other States in need.

On its first anniversary, the Peacebuilding Commission can look back on interlinked achievements and challenges. My delegation wishes to underline the importance of redefining and revitalizing the purpose and mission of the Commission, as mandated in the relevant resolutions. Unless the Commission is able to develop its own rules of procedure and working methods in a transparent, coherent and results-oriented manner, it will fail to bring added value and to identify a niche for itself.

Moreover, in order for the Commission to live up to the expectations and aspirations of the international community, improvements should be made in the following areas.

First, regular and multidimensional coordination and consultations among various stakeholders engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding are of vital importance. The broad experience of the United Nations in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and sustainable development must be fully mobilized, in conjunction with resources from international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and the private sector. To that end, the establishment of frameworks for cross-cutting and continuous dialogue among those stakeholders and the Governments concerned is a prerequisite.

Secondly, after the necessary consultations, both at United Nations Headquarters and in the field, international support must be carefully coordinated in a flexible manner and then funnelled into predetermined priority sectors of recipient countries. Such a process would help to avoid wasteful duplication and misuse, but periodic evaluations and adjustments are required so as to produce better outcomes.

Thirdly, national ownership of post-conflict peacebuilding priority plans and initiatives must remain at the forefront of any effort aimed at sustaining peace, initiating development and promoting post-conflict recovery. Foreign assistance can play a supplementary role, but it cannot replace home-grown endeavours aimed at enhancing institutional frameworks, reinforcing capacity-building and strengthening legal and administrative systems, which ultimately bolster autonomy and self-determination.

Despite the fact that some progress has been made so far, the Peacebuilding Commission is still in the process of learning by doing. That is why periodic reviews of its work by the General Assembly will provide greater insight and direction, in terms of both depth and breadth. The Commission's success will, in the end, depend on the timely and effective translation of pledges into disbursements on the ground.

Mr. Romero-Martínez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation, allow me to express our appreciation for the convening and preparation of this important meeting. We strongly support the ideas put forward on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the Ambassador of Jamaica, Mr. Raymond Wolfe.

When the General Assembly — acting simultaneously with the Security Council in accordance with Articles 7, 22 and 29 of the Charter of the United Nations, and in order to implement the decision taken at the 2005 World Summit — decided to establish the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory organ, an important step was taken, in our view, towards laying down integrated strategies for peacebuilding, defining the necessary measures for post-conflict recovery, and, above all, preventing, through attitudinal shifts, the spread or prolongation of armed conflict.

Today, at this important meeting, we can review the progress made and consider the possibility of enhancing peacebuilding mechanisms for countries emerging from armed conflict or from situations of social instability.

The proposal made at the 2005 World Summit to create that important Commission represented great progress. Its fundamental task is to avert the recurrence of armed conflict and to lead countries emerging from conflict along the path of sustainable development to a system of justice and equality. Now that its functions are properly defined, we feel that the Commission, by maintaining ongoing contact with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, is playing an innovative role in our Organization's reform process.

We take this opportunity to offer some general thoughts on peace. My delegation wishes to stress the imperative need for adequate social development for our peoples, which, together with a profound and sincere resolve to eradicate poverty, may give rise to some glimmers of hope and improvement in many of our societies. Inequity, injustice, poverty, lack of education and, in many cases, oppression and the denial of the fundamental rights inherent in the human person constitute a ready source of incitement to the violence and ruthless confrontation among human beings, all belonging to the same species, that traumatizes and horrifies our sense of humanity.

We consider it important to find a definitive solution to ancient border problems that, in certain parts of the world, are critical factors in national, regional and international instability. That scenario is exacerbated by the lack of adequate markets for fairly-priced commodities from developing countries, agricultural subsidies and tariff barriers — unilaterally imposed in certain cases — that do not help to

facilitate urgently-needed recovery for a country that has emerged from national or regional armed conflict.

On 31 January, it was recalled in the Security Council that more than 16 per cent of the world's population — some 1 billion people — are living, or rather subsisting, in extreme poverty and are directly affected by civil wars or at high risk of such in the very near future. Against that backdrop, our conscience recoils and our eyes cannot help but shed a tear as we contemplate a terrible reality that cannot be erased merely by words or statements. We therefore advocate a more just, humane and united international economic system.

My delegation warmly commends the efforts made to date by the Peacebuilding Commission. Its task is not an easy one, nor are the solutions easy to come by. The peace we all yearn for is one of the most deeply desired goals of humankind; it is one of our most ancient dreams and the reality that humanity has sought most assiduously in this world of anxiety and hope. And yet, the word "peace" can at times seem utopian, like the missing link — unreachable and impossible to attain.

We understand peacebuilding to be a mechanism to reverse conditions of social and economic injustice as a cause of conflict and as a guarantee that violence will never be resorted to as a means to resolve such problems. We therefore deem the role of the Commission to be valuable and necessary to our Organization. Thus, my country, Honduras, cannot fail to express its support for the Commission or to commit itself to full cooperation with it. As an original signatory of the United Nations Charter, Honduras has always maintained that cooperation and attitude and complied with the international legal mandates and structures emanating therefrom.

In conclusion, my delegation aspires to peace with dignity, a peace shared by all — the very same peace that was enshrined by the signatories of the Charter in the following words: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small". In that conviction, we believe that peace will become a reality.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/61/PV.87

General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

87th plenary meeting

Tuesday, 6 February 2007, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 47, 113 and 149 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The President: We are meeting today to resume consideration of agenda items 47, 113 and 149 in order to discuss the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): Madam President, we thank you for having convened this meeting in response to the request of the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered this morning by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Movement.

As one of the two countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, Sierra Leone is grateful for this opportunity to contribute to this preliminary assessment by the General Assembly of the work of the Commission. We say "preliminary" because under operative paragraph 15 of resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), the Commission is required to submit an annual report to the General Assembly. The Assembly is also required to hold an annual debate to review the report, as was noted by many delegations this morning.

The purpose of today's debate is not merely to assert the General Assembly's authority in the establishment and functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission. In the view of the Sierra Leone delegation, the current debate is intended to underscore the vital role that this new mechanism can and should play in assisting countries emerging from armed conflict.

The debate serves a third purpose. It is consistent with and serves as a reminder of the need to mobilize sustained international attention for the benefit of such countries — in other words, to ensure that the international community remains engaged well beyond the end of peacekeeping operations.

There is yet another reason for holding this debate. In our view, it is also intended to demonstrate that the Peacebuilding Commission is operational and that it requires the solidarity and support of all Member States and relevant organizations during this teething stage of its existence.

A good basis for an assessment of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission so far is document S/2006/1050, which contains the Chairs' summary statements of the country-specific meetings on both Burundi and Sierra Leone. It is also relevant in this context to take into account the relations between the Commission and the two specific countries on its

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agenda, namely Burundi and my country, Sierra Leone, as well as their perceptions about the Commission.

For its part, Sierra Leone believes that we must acknowledge that this is a high-profile mechanism. It emerged from the highest political level — the 2005 World Summit at the United Nations. Its establishment is regarded as one of the highlights of the ongoing reform processes in the Organization. It was made operational not by one, but by two of the principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Commission is closely linked to the functions of another new entity, namely the Peacebuilding Fund — one that could be described as the fuel tank of the new machinery.

For new and complex intergovernmental machinery that is less than a year old and one that is still, so to speak, trying to find its feet, the Commission is beginning to have a positive impact on the expectations of Sierra Leone. The Commission is learning from us, and we are also making our own modest contribution to what the Commission has achieved so far. Indeed, we are part of this new experiment in United Nations post-peacekeeping activities.

Sierra Leone facilitated the Commission's consideration of the country-specific agenda because we had already prepared our own national strategic development frameworks for post-conflict recovery leading to sustainable development. The three main components were the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Peace Consolidation Strategy and the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). We had also identified four priority areas that pose critical challenges to our peace consolidation effort.

By the end of its first country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone, the Commission had determined that Sierra Leone was eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund. Seven weeks ago, following the further review and revision of the Peace Consolidation Strategy, the Commission concluded that an initial assistance envelope of approximately $25 million was expected to be made available to us. It will be recalled that, in addition, the Commission has stressed that every effort should be made to deliver the Peacebuilding Fund country assistance envelope for Sierra Leone in January 2007.

Those are some of the important developments that are closely linked with our expectations and assessment of the Commission as a dedicated institutional mechanism to address our special needs.

A few days ago my delegation remarked that, as far as achieving the objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission is concerned, the bottom line is the availability and timely delivery of resources. By drawing attention to the resource aspect of peacebuilding we were not ignoring or underestimating the advisory and coordinating functions of the Commission. On the contrary, the Government is aware that this is an intergovernmental advisory entity. The Government is also aware of — and has expressed its commitment to — the integrated approach to peacebuilding. It also acknowledges that the Commission is also entrusted with responsibility for advising on and proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery.

However, we must admit that the overwhelming majority of Sierra Leoneans — who are still struggling to make ends meet in an environment that is characterized as one of the least developed in the world and to cope with the disastrous consequences of a 10-year-long rebel war — find it almost impossible to understand anything about integrated strategies, strategy papers, reports and frameworks. Besides, as we stated in the Security Council last week (see S/PV.5627), our emphasis on the mobilization and timely delivery of resources for the special needs of countries emerging from conflict is actually derived from the two resolutions operationalizing the functioning of the Commission.

Our emphasis on resources is also based on an unfortunate experience in 1998, a year before the Lomé Peace Agreement was signed. The implementation of our modest but crucial national plan for the disarmament and demobilization of some of the former members of the Sierra Leone army who had been fighting with Revolutionary United Front rebels collapsed because of the lack of adequate and timely delivery of resources. I must say that history will tell to what extent, if any, that unfortunate experience contributed to the rebel military junta invasion of the capital city of Sierra Leone — Freetown — in 1999.

My delegation would like to reiterate its confidence in the Peacebuilding Commission. Its teething problems notwithstanding, the prospects of its fulfilling its mandate are very good. We note, for instance, that a draft outline of the country-specific

workplan for Sierra Leone and a draft calendar for the country-specific meetings of the Commission have been prepared, thanks to the Chairman of the Sierra Leone country-specific meetings, Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, and to Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway. We are pleased that my delegation was also consulted in the process of preparing the drafts. We also note with interest that work is already under way on lessons learned, coordinated by the Ambassador of El Salvador, Mrs. Carmen Gallardo Hernández.

My delegation would also take this opportunity to express its appreciation to all those who have made firm financial commitments to the Peacebuilding Fund. We commend the staff of the Peacebuilding Support Office, under the direction of Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie, the members of the country team, and all those who are directly involved in the task of assisting Sierra Leone in implementing its priority peacebuilding programmes and laying the foundation for sustainable development. In closing, let me add that our expectations are still high.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like at the outset to associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that are members of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Commission is involved in a process of consolidation, and its challenge for the future is the issue of its relevance. Since it is not a new donor entity — without prejudice to the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund — it is essential that the Commission be equipped with proper leadership for mobilizing and coordinating resources and efforts to cooperate with countries emerging from conflict.

In our view, the Peacebuilding Commission cannot and should not become an entity for academic debate. Rather, it should be proactive in advising and cooperating with those countries. To that end, it is essential to strengthen its link, as it has been doing, with the international financial institutions — the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and regional banks — as well as the community of donor countries.

Likewise, we believe that necessary measures must be adopted to ensure broad participation by all relevant sectors, including civil society, in the search for solutions to the most urgent problems faced by countries emerging from conflict.

We believe the role and the work of the Organizational Committee, as the directing entity of the Peacebuilding Commission, must be enhanced — especially the important format of country-specific meetings. We must also avoid competitive approaches that could weaken the Commission's work. To that end, we need concerted action between the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as proper coordination with the Economic and Social Council.

With a view to strengthening the work of the Organizational Committee, we propose establishing an annual timetable of formal meetings, leaving room for the flexibility to accommodate as many informal meetings as might be deemed necessary, in either the country-specific or another format.

We note with concern that discussions are still ongoing regarding how the work of the Peacebuilding Commission should be carried out. The national ownership discussion concerning how to determine and execute national priorities is, of course, a basic and undisputed premise. National priorities emerge from an internal process of consultations carried out by the national Government in which the various national sectors should participate.

But we believe that national priorities should also be determined on the basis of a two-track dynamic from which the Peacebuilding Commission cannot be excluded. According to paragraph 2 (a) of resolution 60/180, one of the main goals of the Peacebuilding Commission is "to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery".

In that context, we note with satisfaction that, during the months in which the Peacebuilding Commission has functioned, addressing the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, specific plans of action for both countries have been reviewed with the active participation of national authorities of the countries concerned and the valuable cooperation of the Peacebuilding Support Office. As recently recalled by the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, the Office has approved the disbursement of significant aid to both of those countries.

It is essential that the Organizational Committee have greater information about the realities on the

ground in Burundi and Sierra Leone. Therefore, we consider it a good idea to visit those countries to, inter alia, provide support through our presence on the ground. But each visit should be based on rotating regional representation and should be led by a delegation whose size makes it easy to travel and engage in productive dialogue with local authorities and all the relevant actors involved in peacebuilding processes.

My delegation also wishes to highlight the work being done by the representatives of Norway and the Netherlands in developing integrated peacebuilding strategies for Burundi and Sierra Leone, which we will continue to discuss in a constructive spirit of goodwill. This year, we will also have to follow up on developments related to the implementation of agreed programmes. We will also have to endeavour to attract new resources for the Peacebuilding Fund. My country is committed to making every effort to cooperate to that end.

Finally, we believe that, at this point, it is essential that the Commission accord priority to active and concrete cooperation with countries emerging from conflict in order to ensure lasting peace.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission through parallel General Assembly and Security Council resolutions adopted in 2005 was one of the important and tangible achievements of Member States in reforming the United Nations. Experience shows that lasting peace and the effective settlement of armed conflict can be achieved only on the basis of a comprehensive approach.

All the more important, therefore, is the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, a truly unique body designed to fill a major gap in the international system for post-conflict peacebuilding. Although the Commission is still in its early stages, we share the high expectations placed in it. This organ has great practical potential and could become one of the most important mechanisms for the provision of international recovery assistance to post-conflict countries.

The Commission should be commended for the work it has done in its first six months of existence with regard to Burundi and Sierra Leone. We note the efforts made by the Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Ismael Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola; by his two country coordinators, Mr. Johan Løvald, Permanent Representative of Norway, and Mr. Frank Majoor, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands; and by Mrs. Carmen Gallardo Hernández, Permanent Representative of El Salvador and Vice-Chairperson of the Commission. In addition, we cannot fail to welcome the excellent work done by the Peacebuilding Support Office, headed by Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie.

We expect that this General Assembly meeting, like the open Security Council debate held on 31 January 2007 (see S/PV.5627), will serve as a forum for the exchange of views among interested parties in order to consider practical ways and means to better help the Commission carry out its mandate and to create conditions conducive to its effective and productive work.

The danger that conflict will reignite is always present in societies emerging from conflict. The transition from peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding is fraught with difficulties. As long as some of the initial causes of the crisis remain, the situation will continue to be unstable. Hence, the Commission will play a crucial role, upon the request of the Governments concerned, in identifying, prioritizing and allocating donor resources that meet the needs of the relevant Governments in order to resolve all of these fundamental problems and carry out forward-looking tasks, while not encroaching upon the mandate of the Peacebuilding Fund. The Commission must be a reliable partner in assisting the Governments of post-conflict countries and is essential in helping them to achieve reconciliation and stability and in ensuring a smooth transition from conflict to sustainable peace and development.

However, the Commission should avoid being overambitious in its initial plans and should focus its resources on the adoption of practical and concrete measures. It is only through asserting and enhancing its prestige and authority through action at the outset that the Commission can earn a worthy reputation in the eyes of the international community.

We believe that the attention of the Peacebuilding Commission should be focused on transparent efforts related to the countries on its agenda, together with impartial collective analysis to identify its peacebuilding priorities, along with integrated strategies and programmes for realizing them. In that

regard, we look forward to its adoption of agreed pragmatic recommendations, which will be crucial for States receiving peacebuilding assistance and for all participants in this process.

Here, an important role must be played by the Peacebuilding Support Office. An important element of its work is to provide prompt and appropriate information to Commission members regarding the countries in question and to share up-to-the-minute experience gained in resolving interdisciplinary questions related to peacekeeping. Due consideration of the Commission's recommendations — coordinated with the Governments of countries receiving assistance — by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, other entities of the United Nations system, the donor community and other interested parties will enhance the coordination of post-conflict assistance and thus reduce the risk that crisis will re-erupt.

We welcome the establishment of the Peacebuilding Fund, which will serve as a catalyst in attracting much-needed yet often scarce financial resources for peacebuilding in countries that are at the earliest stages of emerging from conflict until traditional mechanisms for attracting donor aid begin to function. In the context of the Peacebuilding Fund, it would be undesirable for the Commission to be erroneously perceived as a donor entity, which it is not. We share the hopes expressed here today that the Fund's role will be clearly defined so that it can fully accomplish its task of facilitating collective peacebuilding efforts.

An important aspect of the Peacebuilding Commission is its efforts on the ground, aided by the country presence of the United Nations and by the donor community. In that connection, greater attention should be given to ensuring a harmonious and smooth interface between the activities of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Commission and those of existing coordination mechanisms, particularly within the United Nations system.

Of course, the Commission does not replace existing bodies. The principle of complementarity underlies the interaction between the Commission and other bodies in the United Nations family. We need interaction between the Commission and United Nations agencies, including in the field — interaction of a kind that does not undermine the Organization's existing system for operational activities, but rather strengthens it, including by taking account of the presence of specific programmes promoting cooperation with States receiving peacebuilding assistance that have been adopted by the executive boards of the relevant international agencies. We believe that the General Assembly is precisely the forum where Member States can find an answer to that question.

Strengthening the organic link between the Commission and the Security Council requires particular attention, particularly vis-à-vis the situations in Burundi and Sierra Leone, which are on the agendas of both bodies. It cannot be otherwise, given the indissoluble link among issues of peace, security and development. It is essential to ensure the timely exchange of information, a clear division of labour and complementarity between both bodies. Of course, that must be done in tandem with developing links between the Commission, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Indeed, the Peacebuilding Commission offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate in practice the usefulness of a comprehensive approach to the post-conflict recovery of countries emerging from conflict. We all know that this tendency is gaining momentum.

We believe that attention to the Commission by those two principal organs of the United Nations will be a guarantee of close constructive partnership and complementarity among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council with a view to achieving our common goal: enhancing the effectiveness of international efforts in the area of peacebuilding. We support the appeal for increased coordinated and complementary efforts to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission continues to mature in a streamlined and harmonious manner, which is now essential to the work of the global Organization.

Mr. Choi Young-jin (Republic of Korea): Let me join others in thanking you, Madam President, for this opportunity to discuss the important work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that, although the Commission has only recently become operational, it has already begun to play a role, and that the Peacebuilding Fund is in place. We are also pleased to note that at the two sets of country-specific meetings held so far, on Burundi and on Sierra Leone,

serious deliberations led to thoughtful recommendations on how to proceed with peacebuilding activities in those two States.

These developments are signs that the international community recognizes the growing importance of post-conflict peacebuilding. In recent years, the demand for peacekeeping activities has grown rapidly, and that trend seems likely to continue. Such missions are dangerous and costly, but the cost of unrestrained conflict is even greater. Member States have therefore come to recognize that preserving and stabilizing peace through sustained peacebuilding efforts is often a better investment.

My delegation is of the view that these early outcomes demonstrate the potential of the Peacebuilding Commission. Nevertheless, the Commission is still in its early stages, and we cannot yet pass judgement on its work. There are remaining procedural details to be ironed out; we hope that that process will be completed soon, allowing the Peacebuilding Commission to focus its attention more fully on its substantive work.

My delegation thinks that it is fair to say that the establishment of the Commission is a positive result of the Organization-wide drive to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our work. Specifically, it will fill a gap by developing holistic, synergistic strategies to coordinate the peacebuilding work of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other actors, including the international financial institutions. By involving those institutions in debates on peacebuilding strategies, the Peacebuilding Commission will be able to enhance the coherence of peacebuilding efforts and improve the utilization of resources to achieve our goals.

We hope that the Peacebuilding Commission will be increasingly action-oriented, interacting with the relevant United Nations bodies and other actors and helping them to share information. At the same time, in order to build trust for its activities and to fulfil its promise of increased efficiency and coherence, the Peacebuilding Commission must strive to ensure that its work is transparent and open to oversight by Member States.

Member States demonstrated their collective wisdom in creating the Peacebuilding Commission. If the Commission is to fulfil its role, however, we need to ensure that it has the financial resources necessary to do so. To that end, the Republic of Korea has contributed $3 million to the Peacebuilding Fund. We hope that as the Peacebuilding Commission continues to demonstrate its value, as it has begun to do in the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, Member States will respond by devoting greater resources to the Fund.

Beyond its important role in responding to the initial needs of post-conflict societies, the Peacebuilding Fund should also serve to keep international attention on post-conflict situations, prompting the international community to help with financing for crucial rebuilding and development work.

In terms of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in post-conflict societies, my delegation recognizes the concerns of many Member States regarding national ownership. In our view, it is neither possible nor desirable to build a sustainable peace without the active participation of the national authorities of the countries involved. No State can maintain its own peace and security without an effective Government; national Governments should therefore be strengthened, not weakened, by peacebuilding efforts.

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that, in some cases, the very basis of the conflict is a dispute over national authority. Even when no question of legitimacy exists, conflicts can weaken and undermine Governments so severely that they are unable to function effectively. We believe that every effort should be made to identify, support and work with national authorities, and that national ownership of peacebuilding should be maintained as much as possible. In extreme cases, however, when there is a lack of competent national authority, the international community still has a responsibility to provide support for post-conflict peacebuilding.

The Republic of Korea is a strong supporter of international peacebuilding efforts. Indeed, we have our own history of recovery from conflict, and we recognize the tremendous value of international support. That is why we supported the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. We have also participated in United Nations activities in Timor-Leste and other post-conflict situations. Our commitment to the peacebuilding work of the United Nations remains firm, and we look forward to an increasingly proactive Peacebuilding Commission that can contribute significantly to United

Nations efforts to ensure peace, stability, development, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to thank you, Madam President, for this timely open debate on a subject of great importance: the work done and the progress achieved by the Peacebuilding Commission. Like you, we believe that the General Assembly surely is the appropriate forum to address these questions, since in this forum all States Members of the Organization are on an equal footing.

As we have said on previous occasions, the Peacebuilding Commission was established to respond to our Organization's need for an institutional mechanism that could properly assist countries emerging from or at risk of relapsing into conflict, with a view to helping them to achieve peace as an indispensable phase of their development. Since the beginning of the negotiations aimed at the establishment of the Commission, the Argentine delegation participated actively in the discussions on various structural aspects, which ultimately led the adoption of resolutions in the Security Council and the General Assembly clearly setting out the main objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission: to focus attention on the reconstruction and consolidation of institutions that are necessary for post-conflict recovery and to lay the foundations for sustainable development. In our view, the Peacebuilding Commission is a fundamental instrument that will allow us to directly address activities aimed at the reconstruction and institutional recovery of States that have gone through conflict.

Likewise, the Peacebuilding Fund is the best way of ensuring foreseeable financing for initial recovery activities and thus prolonging the international community's focus on post-conflict reconstruction. The Fund will make it possible to "close the initial circuit" — that is to say, devise an emergency plan with foreseeable funding.

At the request of the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission has already held initial formal meetings to consider the situations in Burundi and in Sierra Leone, with the participation of the Governments of both countries.

In that respect, we would like to underscore the importance of participation by the countries concerned when their situation is being reviewed. Presentations by Governments, local authorities or representatives to the Commission make it possible to engage in a detailed analysis and offer a more comprehensive perspective of the realities on the ground. Such data allows for the more precise identification of priorities, taking account of the requirements and resources in each case.

On that basis, a timetable can be set up for the achievement of goals, and short-, medium- and long-term plans can be developed which must, in our view, be regulated by clear and precise guidelines set out by the Commission and must also accord with the spirit of the Organization and of the international community.

We believe that the report to be produced by the Commission containing these recommendations should also include mechanisms for the achievement of objectives and the implementation of plans, and that it should include monitoring machinery so as to avoid any misuse of funds. The Commission should ensure proper and effective use of the funds disbursed.

With regard to the two elements we have mentioned — clear and precise guidelines, and monitoring machinery — we would like to add another that we deem vital to the smooth and predictable functioning of this body: the establishment of rules of procedure and methods of work. We are aware of the fact that these are currently being developed by the Commission, and we trust that their prompt definition will contribute to improving its functioning, leading to fruitful results.

Before concluding, Argentina wishes to express its satisfaction at Panama's inclusion in the membership of the Peacebuilding Commission, which has made it possible to redress somewhat the imbalance in regional representation, which is an underlying principle of the Organization that has long been stressed by my country as well as by other Latin American nations.

My country welcomes the establishment of the Commission, whose work will complement the final phase of the recovery process in post-conflict situations and help to achieve reconstruction and the strengthening of institutions, in an endeavour to prevent any recurrence of conflict, because we know from experience that military operations are not sufficient to fully resolve a conflict.

Finally, I should like to say that while security is the primary pillar for achieving peace in any armed conflict, the task of the United Nations, I would recall, should always be to promote development and respect for and the defence of human rights. The work of the Peacebuilding Commission must therefore, in our view, also be aimed achieving those goals.

Ms. Hřebíčková (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic, too, was very pleased to participate in the debates leading to the eventual establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. We believe that the Commission is one of the real major achievements of the process of United Nations reform. That is why we were among the first countries to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund.

We fully support the statement of the European Union presented by Germany today. The Czech Republic has become a new member of the Commission's Organizational Committee and, as such, would like to commit itself to making active contributions to the activities of both the Committee and the country-specific meetings. We view those meetings as crucial to success in the countries on the Commission's agenda.

Mr. Baja (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Czech Republic believes that the new organ should be action-oriented and should not be a hostage to bureaucratic procedural manoeuvres. It should act on the basis of mutual trust. In order to resolve the many difficult issues facing the Commission, the Organizational Committee and country-specific meetings should give priority attention to and focus on the concrete working plans produced by both the Burundi and Sierra Leone Governments, in close cooperation with the Peacebuilding Support Office.

We believe that one of the Commission's priorities should be to focus on early-warning mechanisms so as to identify potential setbacks and risks in the countries on the agenda. That would enable the Commission to better serve the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in identifying the optimal mix of measures and in taking effective, concerted action in building sustainable peace.

We are in a position to offer some capacity and know-how and thus assist in post-conflict democratic processes and in the protection of human rights. We know that overall reconstruction and rehabilitation cannot be complete without the full inclusion of civil society and the private sector. That is why we believe that all those elements should participate actively in the country-specific meetings.

It is crucial to focus on transitional justice projects and planning, because forgiveness is important to achieve reconciliation. However, permanent peace must be built on the foundation of the rule of law, the inclusion of civil society and free access to information. The Commission can only facilitate. We are firmly convinced that peace must be built, and kept, by domestic actors.

We believe that the role of the Peacebuilding Fund should be primarily catalytic. The amounts disbursed are, of course, important, but even more important, in our view, is choosing the right mix of projects directed at the most imminent post-conflict problems and requirements, without losing sight of overall peacebuilding strategies. We should not pretend that the Fund can finance all peacebuilding activities.

I can assure the Assembly that my country is ready to cooperate fully to ensure that the initial work of the Peacebuilding Commission is successful.

Mr. Tarragô (Brazil): My delegation would like to thank Ms. Al-Khalifa for having convened this meeting to review the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, in response to the request made by the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. This meeting is a follow-up to the initiative of the Russian Federation, which organized an open debate in the Security Council last month, which we acknowledge. We should like also to commend the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, for his comprehensive presentation. A word of acknowledgment also goes to the Peacebuilding Support Office for assisting the Peacebuilding Commission in its deliberations.

As more than a year has elapsed since the 2005 Summit decision that created the new Commission, and six months since the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission was set up, it is a propitious time for the General Assembly to assess the work done thus far and to prepare for the next steps. It is also appropriate that at this early stage, in reviewing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the General Assembly seek the views of the membership.

This exercise might contribute interesting insights concerning the new organ and ways to improve its performance in the light of its particular situation vis-a-vis the main bodies of the United Nations system. The General Assembly, as the democratic forum par excellence of the United Nations, is the most authoritative body to undertake a comprehensive debate on the work of the Commission.

For over a decade — since before the 2004 proposal of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change for the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission — Brazil had been advocating a mechanism that would provide for a solid link between peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development. After carefully considering the issue, we continue to hold the view that those activities are not consecutive stages in a process; rather, they embrace a set of complementary actions that are required in order to help lay down a basis on which a country in conflict, or one emerging therefrom, can build a lasting peace and a fair and viable society.

Member States, especially those in post-conflict situations, have continued to have high expectations for the launching of the Peacebuilding Commission. The new body has been created to serve as a powerful instrument to assist in the transition from conflict to sustained peace. However, even at the initial stage, the Commission has very little to show, a situation that, if not reversed, does not bode well for subsequent phases.

Strenuous negotiations led to the birth, during the 2005 Summit, of this new member of the United Nations family. The built-in imbalance in the composition of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission generated much acrimony and can be faulted for the shaky beginning. We believe that more focused attention must be paid to the principle of equitable regional representation as a way to ensure the democratic governance of the Peacebuilding Commission and genuine participation.

We should be mindful that the Peacebuilding Commission is a novel creation in this House. It is a product of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and has close links with the Economic and Social Council. It is accountable to the whole membership through the General Assembly.

On many occasions in the Organizational Committee we have expressed our concern that the new body has a long way to go before it can produce the expected results. It has not completed the drafting of its working methods, which, to a large extent, can account for the hesitant beginning of the Commission's operation. Little attention has been given to the drafting of the rules of procedure, which, in turn, has led to long debates on issues of little or no relevance.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a very important organ of the United Nations and, as such, should be supported by the General Assembly. For many countries suffering from the scourge of internecine conflict, the Commission could be a venue for mustering much-needed international cooperation to enable them to recover as early as possible from the problems engendered by political instability and lack of security.

We take satisfaction from the fact that two sister African countries, Burundi and Sierra Leone, have been selected for country-specific meetings. Brazil supports all efforts in the Commission to reach successful results in those meetings, which will be critical for the future of that body.

My delegation believes that one of the main tasks of the Peacebuilding Commission will be to articulate short-, medium- and long-term perspectives on peacebuilding in post-conflict scenarios. It should organize itself to undertake that job head-on. To that end, it should consult the views of the countries selected in the peacebuilding process and coordinate with the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, especially with regard to engaging the many United Nations bodies and agencies and associated institutions in developing recovery strategies. Particular coordination should be maintained with the Security Council, notably in making sure that assistance in post-conflict recovery is not hampered by the early withdrawal of peacekeeping forces.

Brazil believes that the General Assembly should help the Peacebuilding Commission to gain legitimacy and authority as an advisory body in the United Nations family. The General Assembly could, for instance, address the crucial aspect of balance in the composition of the Peacebuilding Commission when indicating its members. In reviewing the Commission's work, the Assembly could issue appropriate guidance as to the involvement of the whole membership in the task of helping countries in post-conflict situations. In that way we would avoid any duplication of the

Peacebuilding Commission's work with that of the many other existing forums of donors and aid-recipient members. We also believe that the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could pool their efforts to provide the Commission with sufficient authority to properly discharge its functions.

By involving a wider array of actors, the reviews and discussions undertaken in the Commission could furnish the main United Nations bodies with better-informed analysis of the possibilities for the post-conflict recovery of the countries concerned, thereby improving the quality of our decisions. We know from experience that there is no gap between peacekeeping, reconstruction and development. International cooperation efforts should address all of those aspects, for it is hard to imagine that one could be secured on a lasting basis without the others.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): At the outset, I would like to welcome this opportunity to participate in this special meeting of General Assembly devoted to the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. Iceland, as a member of the European Economic Area but not a member of the European Union, aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union during the open debate in the Security Council on this subject on 31 January (see S/PV.5627). I will therefore refrain from repeating myself and will just highlight a few points.

The Government of Iceland attaches great importance to the Peacebuilding Commission. Iceland underlined its support with a contribution of $1 million to the Peacebuilding Fund. It did so in a spirit of the collective responsibility of all United Nations Member States for strengthening the peacebuilding architecture, as the President of the General Assembly stated in her statement this morning. I would also like to take this opportunity to echo what Ambassador Wolfe of Jamaica said on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement this morning regarding the fact that the disbursement of financial and other support must be accompanied by swift action.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, is a key achievement of the United Nations reform process and should be developed to become the centrepiece of United Nations efforts to help to strengthen post-conflict countries.

The need to do better is obvious, as my Norwegian colleague said in his statement this morning. To achieve that, we must ensure that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission is both flexible and results-oriented, focusing on country-specific situations. We believe that the approach of the Peacebuilding Commission should be comprehensive, with a strong focus on concrete recommendations for action on the ground. Respect for human rights is a fundamental and integral aspect of that approach. There is also a need to ensure the necessary follow-up and practical implementation of its recommendations in a systematic manner through regular review meetings.

We note the progress achieved during the first seven months of the Peacebuilding Commission in assisting the first countries under consideration: Burundi and Sierra Leone. In this context, our gratitude goes to the Chairmen of the two country-specific meetings, Ambassador Frank Majoor for Sierra Leone and Ambassador Johan Løvald for Burundi, for their important input and reports earlier in the debate. I also thank the Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, my colleague from Angola.

The Peacebuilding Commission must now build on this work in the months ahead to develop its strategic goals and rules of procedure, as well as strengthen its cooperation and consultations with all relevant actors. We underline the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office in this process. As many speakers have pointed out, there is a need to develop further the working relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In this context, we must focus on effectiveness and complementarity and strive to avoid any duplication of efforts. We look forward to further discussions to that end, and, as the President of the Economic and Social Council stated earlier this morning, we are already encouraged by the emerging consensus on the fact that interaction between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council enhances the effective functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Commission has an ambitious agenda to fulfil. Its success and effectiveness will ultimately depend on the full involvement and commitment of the countries concerned, Member States, United Nations bodies on the ground and, not least, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): Allow me to join others by thanking President Al-Khalifa for having convened this very important meeting. The issues before us are of profound importance. My delegation is hopeful that our deliberations will lead to the enhancing of our collective support for the Peacebuilding Commission in the exercise of its crucial mandate.

Indonesia associates itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Before the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, there was an acute need for a single forum that could facilitate effective interplay between the relevant international and national actors on how best to address the requirements of post-conflict situations and to prevent the States concerned from relapsing into conflict. That critical gap in the international support system was highlighted by our leaders when they called for the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission at the 2005 World Summit.

The Commission is still in the teething stage, but expectations of it are high. It is therefore our common responsibility to nurture the Commission and to ensure that full support is extended by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

We believe that, rather than judging the performance of the Commission at this stage, we need to devise some practical ways through which the Commission can be supported further in performing its tasks. The General Assembly and the Security Council will have an opportunity comprehensively to assess the work of the Commission when its report is presented.

For the Peacebuilding Commission to be effective, its work should translate into meaningful and beneficial actions for the peoples concerned. One of the fundamental requirements of the Commission is that it play a central role, through its recommendations on the coordination of the relevant international and national entities, in leveraging their comparative advantages. A truly inclusive and coordinated approach will systematically synergize peacebuilding efforts at both the national and international levels.

Coordination between the pertinent institutions, including United Nations bodies, needs to be enhanced. It has been our experience that at times, this has not been done in a systematic way, with the involvement of all related parties and a requisite commitment on their part to follow through.

In that regard, we should like to underline that in its coordination activities, the Commission should neither create further complexity in existing processes nor lead to any micromanaging of the activities being carried out in the countries concerned. The priorities set in the post-conflict recovery phase should be established by the national Governments under consideration. National ownership is paramount.

A coherent, organized yet flexible international support mechanism, through the Commission, would facilitate better access and response for countries in need, with improved results.

The other core function of the Commission is to marshal resources for post-conflict requirements. The role of the Commission in bringing together, and eliciting support from, the pertinent international and national entities in that regard becomes even more important when the countries in conflict are no longer making international headlines. The backing of the global community in that connection is very important.

It is also very important that the international community work with the national authorities in post-conflict countries, with particular attention to assisting them in building institutional capacity in their priority sectors. The focus should be on developing a sustainable economic model and a lasting peace.

Considering the multidimensional nature of conflicts, it is imperative that the Commission take a comprehensive approach when proposing integrated peacebuilding strategies.

In that context, the Economic and Social Council has an important role to play, particularly through the technical capabilities of its various functional and regional commissions and other subsidiary bodies. There needs to be regular interaction between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council, in the context of which relevant lessons learned and best practices can be shared.

The Economic and Social Council may wish to take up the topic of post-conflict recovery as its theme at the annual ministerial reviews in the future. We believe that our common goal should be to mobilize the entire institutional machinery of the United Nations to promote an across-the-board approach that addresses the difficult issues inherent in post-conflict situations.

The positive role of the relevant stakeholders is crucial to a successful transition from the post-conflict phase to the normal process of sustainable development. Civil society and non-governmental organization (NGOs), including women's organizations, should also play a constructive role in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The last two country meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone have been more action-oriented. We note that the work plans for both countries have recently been presented for consideration. Along with the development of integrated peacebuilding strategies, with the full involvement of the respective Governments of Burundi and of Sierra Leone, it is critical that the Commission also monitor progress on other key elements contained in the Chairs' summaries of the country meetings, such as the disbursement of funding envelopes. There need to be more frequent meetings of the Commission, in a structured manner.

We regard the work of both the Organizational Committee and country-specific configurations as seminal. Success in one will aid the other. It is incumbent upon us to support both. However, the Organizational Committee has a broader purview. A properly empowered and robust Committee will serve to strengthen the work of the Commission as a whole. There also needs to be a closer working relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we stand ready to shoulder our responsibility to contribute to ensuring more concrete and practical outcomes of the Commission's work.

Mrs. Mladineo (Croatia): At the outset, let me say that peacebuilding is a multidimensional, cross-cutting and multilayered process. I would therefore like to thank Ms. Al-Khalifa for having convened this meeting of the General Assembly as well as the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that encouraged the holding of this debate.

The General Assembly, as the only principal organ of the United Nations with universal membership, is the place to discuss the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in carrying out its mandate. In this context, drawing on the in-depth experience of the full membership of the General Assembly is of crucial importance.

I would also like to say that Croatia aligns itself with the statement by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union.

Croatia has been elected to the Peacebuilding Commission from among those countries that have considerable peacekeeping and peacebuilding experience, in particular on the beneficiary side. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to speak again about several issues that I have already referred to in other United Nations forums.

It is important always to bear in mind that the Peacebuilding Commission has been established, by both General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in order to fill a peacebuilding gap in the United Nations system. Croatia has strongly supported that effort; in our view, improvements in that respect are much needed. For the first time, the United Nations has a mechanism for ensuring that countries emerging from conflict have a better chance of achieving sustainable peace. In this regard, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is truly historic.

In order for the peacebuilding process to be successful and effective, there must be a national consensus and a political commitment on the part of the Government in question. However, there should also be sustainable international support for its effort. Working together, the Government and the international community need to create an environment conducive to democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. The involvement of the General Assembly, with its constant focus on these issues, is of the utmost importance.

The international community also needs to empower the Government in question so that it can establish, operationalize and carry out a sustainable development strategy. Such a strategy should include not only short-term development goals, but also long-term ones, such as education for all, access to health and social services and ensuring a gender-equality perspective. The Government must also take full responsibility for the strategy and its implementation.

At the same time, all international programmes must be fully coordinated and aligned with the strategy, including those of bilateral donors.

The Peacebuilding Commission must ensure that this international and national link is established and that it is strong and coordinated. It is therefore important to work further on the consolidation and fleshing out of its practices. We must learn by doing. We must establish working methods that we deem pragmatic and necessary. We should not become encumbered by heavy rules and restrictions. Our work must be modelled according to what is best for achieving good results on the ground in each and every case. This means that we must remain focused on the situation in countries that are currently on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Peacebuilding Commission is required to submit a report to the General Assembly later this year. At that point, we should all take into account that the Peacebuilding Commission will have been in existence for only one year. It is a body that has been established to promote new practices in the work of the United Nations. We believe that, ultimately, the value-added role of the Peacebuilding Commission will be measured by its impact on the ground. Croatia, as a Commission member, is fully prepared to contribute to achieving the best possible results.

Mr. Sorcar (Bangladesh): Let me begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for having convened this very timely meeting on the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission. We are confident that deliberations at this meeting will provide important and valuable input and guidance for addressing the outstanding organizational and substantive issues pertaining to the Peacebuilding Commission and will thereby facilitate the effective fulfilment of its mandated responsibilities.

Bangladesh associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus of the Peacebuilding Commission. In addition, we would like to highlight a number of points.

The Peacebuilding Commission, as we are all aware, has been set up to address an institutional lacuna in the United Nations structure. We are heartened by the step-by-step institutionalization of the process of peacebuilding through the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office and, most recently, the launching of the Peacebuilding Fund. Those three bodies, with the Peacebuilding Commission in the centre, must work in tandem to achieve institutional harmony. We should take care not to get entangled in jurisdictional or procedural overstepping. The Peacebuilding Commission should concentrate on such measures as marshalling critical actors to assist national authorities in immediate post-relief recovery efforts so as to pave the way for medium- to long-term reconstruction. The Organizational Committee should be at the helm of all peacebuilding activities and take stock of input from all relevant agencies. In this context, the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office will be critical. It should be the link between the Secretary-General and the Commission. The Office should be a repository of wisdom, knowledge and best practices.

Post-conflict societies must take charge of their own destiny — this is the issue of national ownership. As our post-liberation experience in Bangladesh shows, it took decades of steady nation-building efforts to bring us to the level of macroeconomic stability that we have today. It was achieved through domestic initiatives, including home-grown ideas like microcredit and women's non-formal education, combined with external material support. In the same vein, it is the responsibility of the national Governments of post-conflict countries to set out their respective national priorities and guide United Nations peacebuilding efforts properly and to their fullest benefit. In this context, the sharing of experiences might prove useful in furthering sustainable peace.

It is imperative to build pluralist political institutions to provide a propitious societal framework in which peacebuilding activities can take place and flourish. Furthermore, the root causes of conflict should be identified and appropriate remedial measures adopted. The restoration of an environment of mutual trust, confidence and tolerance through the repair and transformation of damaged relationships is the key to the cessation of hostilities. This entails a process of societal reconciliation and healing to alleviate the trauma of the victims. Justice and the rule of law need to gain ground so as to create a social base where human rights are respected. The whole of the Government machinery, and particularly the part that plays a direct role in creating conditions for peace, must be overhauled and put back to work. A system of accountability needs to be established leading to a

process of democratization. Initiatives at the microeconomic and macroeconomic levels must be shored up to build the infrastructure necessary to provide a platform for the launching of broad economic activities.

Throughout the peacebuilding process, it will be important to create peace constituencies. Middle-range actors such as teachers, lawyers and religious leaders can often function as links between the grass roots and higher levels. It is also expected that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office, together with the international financial and other organizations, will be the most critical peacebuilding agents.

Since peacebuilding is an all-encompassing exercise, Government efforts only will not suffice. Sincere and unqualified support will be required from the private sector, civil society, development partners and all other stakeholders, external and domestic. In our own experience, civil society can provide vital support for the public authorities. In Bangladesh, non-governmental organizations in particular play a significant role in society. But there are many others that have contributed to society as well. The sharing of best practices — an exercise successfully replicated in many parts of the world — can lend a big hand in peacebuilding endeavours.

The Peacebuilding Commission has just started its journey. The work done so far by the Commission on Sierra Leone and Burundi is noteworthy. The Peacebuilding Support Office and the Chairmen of the country-specific meetings deserve to be applauded. We commend the Governments of Sierra Leone and of Burundi for their cooperation. We are thankful to the General Assembly and to the Security Council for their interest in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

However, this should not lead to complacency. This is only the beginning, and there remains considerable scope for improvement. We are of the view that inter-agency relations should be further strengthened and that the Organizational Committee should infuse more dynamism into peacebuilding activities by playing a more proactive and lead role. Furthermore, the Peacebuilding Commission should be untiring in its self-evaluation and stocktaking. For the Commission, it is the beginning of a long journey, with many post-conflict societies waiting for assistance.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): Sweden aligns itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity, some of them based on observations gleaned from our participation in the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission constitutes one of the major reform achievements of the 2005 Summit, and we need to follow up on its progress. This debate provides an opportunity to make some preliminary assessments of initial experiences and provide guidance for our future work. The issue of peacebuilding will be from now on a standing feature on our agenda, and we look forward to participating actively in the annual debates in the General Assembly, as envisioned in the founding resolution.

We participated in the initial two meetings of the Sierra Leone configuration in October and in December. Those first substantive discussions form a good basis for the future engagement of the Commission in Sierra Leone. It has identified a set of challenges and gaps, based on input from the Government of Sierra Leone. It has also started to monitor progress and make recommendations.

Sweden believes that in the next phase, the level of engagement and commitment by the Commission should become more concrete and action-oriented, based on an interactive and frank exchange of views. In order to achieve this, it is vital to ensure that meetings are thoroughly prepared. This should be done through an inclusive process, involving all relevant stakeholders, also at the field level.

The Commission should help achieve a higher level of coordination and burden-sharing among actors in Sierra Leone, focusing on efforts directly related to peacebuilding. The Commission should also become a forum for open dialogue between the Government and the other participants, so as to make clear what is expected by the various actors and to follow through on the goals that have been set.

A mapping exercise of ongoing activities within the priority areas is needed in order for participants to be able to contribute more effectively. We therefore appreciate the Chairman's intention to elaborate a concrete work plan on measures to be taken by the Government of Sierra Leone and the international

community. That is an important step towards further strengthening the link between the Commission and activities in the field.

We also welcome the fact that the Peacebuilding Support Office is now more or less fully staffed and that, with increased capacity, the Office should be in a better position to prepare and follow up the meetings of the Commission.

At a more general level, it is evident to us that the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council all have vital and complementary roles to play in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. In order to avoid overlap and inefficiencies, we would strongly encourage enhanced coordination among those bodies.

We also need to fully involve the international financial institutions in our work. Those institutions have an essential role to play in peacebuilding efforts, including in the implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission. Furthermore, non-governmental organization (NGOs) have an important role, not least in ensuring local ownership of the peacebuilding strategies. NGOs should be part of our common efforts in the framework of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Within the United Nations, concerted efforts under the leadership of the Peacebuilding Support Office should ensure coherence and coordination of activities. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme all have special responsibilities in that regard.

The Peacebuilding Fund is an important component of that architecture. We support the use of the Fund in Sierra Leone and Burundi and would encourage the Secretary-General to consider using its resources in other countries emerging from conflict, in accordance with the Fund's mandate. We would also like to re-emphasize the Fund's catalytic role and the fact that its role is to support key activities for peacebuilding. It is important to keep in mind that the Fund was never intended to become the main vehicle for financial support to any country in a given situation. In addition to contributing substantially to the Fund, Sweden, for its part, will also increase its funding to peacebuilding activities within the framework of United Nations funds and programmes. We urge other Member States to come forward with voluntary contributions to the Fund.

We understand fully the initial need for the Commission not to strain its limited capacity and to gain experience. While it may still be too early to increase the number of countries on its agenda, it is essential that relatively soon we consider addressing, in the Peacebuilding Commission, other post-conflict situations. In our view, the Commission's greatest added value lies in the initial stages of post-conflict.

The ultimate goal of the Commission is to lower the rate of recurrence of conflict. In order to reach that goal, it is time to intensify the concrete action taken in the Peacebuilding Commission framework. But in doing so, we must also show a long-term commitment in order to achieve progress that will meet coming challenges in specific countries.

The primary responsibility for peacebuilding lies with the countries on the Commission's agenda themselves. But the Commission and its participants must be ready to lend assistance, in a spirit of partnership. Sweden is committed to doing its share.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): We welcome today's plenary meeting today to discuss the implementation of resolution 60/180 operationalizing the Peacebuilding Commission. Our deliberations on the challenges and opportunities confronting the Commission will no doubt help to clarify the issues facing the Commission in the fulfilment of its tasks.

At the outset, my delegation would like to compliment Jamaica for its effective contribution to evolving a common position within the Non-Aligned Movement on peacebuilding issues, and also to associate ourselves fully with the statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Our statement, accordingly, will be complementary to the content of the Non-Aligned Movement's statement, emphasizing some aspects that, in our view, are essential to retaining an undiminished focus on post-conflict recovery efforts and to sustain the credibility of the Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of Angola for his stewardship of the Peacebuilding Commission as well as the Permanent Representatives of Norway and of the Netherlands for their leadership in the country-specific configurations of the Commission. We also

appreciate El Salvador's chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned.

In discussing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, it is important to recall its main purposes, as stated in paragraph 2 of resolution 60/180. The three main purposes emphasize the imperative of bringing together all relevant actors to marshal resources; supporting institution-building efforts and the development of integrated strategies for sustainable development; and ensuring predictable financing for early recovery activities. We re-emphasize the continued relevance of those objectives to the work of the Commission.

Those main purposes constitute the core of the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission, whose repository of authority remains the Organizational Committee. We consider that certain specific elements of those main purposes relate directly to the Commission's various formats, in particular the country-specific configurations. This is especially the case given that the country-specific configurations are intended to bring together relevant actors and development partners to assist in recovery efforts. While this distinction will continue to be appreciated, we seek to preserve the integrity and the primacy of the Organizational Committee in its overall authority and functions.

We also need to appreciate that the wording of paragraph 2 of the General Assembly resolution implies that there are other purposes which could also help drive the Commission in its work. This arises from the reality that no two post-conflict peacebuilding situations are alike, and, likewise, the challenges and opportunities presented by each of them are unique. It is therefore left to our creative minds to interpret the resolution and to help empower the Commission to approach the specificities of each peacebuilding situation with particular emphasis and attention, and, indeed, to find the adequate resources that each situation deserves. It is in this context that we wish to stress that paragraph 2 should be approached in the context of the preambular part of the resolution, which provides certain specific indicators and objectives. For instance, some situations may require more of an economic development focus than a conflict resolution orientation in their transformation from recovery to sustainable peace.

The affirmation of the primary responsibility of national Governments in identifying their priorities and strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding is an essential condition in this context. The need to enhance coordination among other organs of the United Nations, as defined in the Charter, remains another parameter. This makes clear that the purview of the Peacebuilding Commission is broad enough to enable it to consider various situations at different levels. The Peacebuilding Commission could focus on issues of concern to national authorities on the basis of both the main purposes and the other purposes inherent in the resolution.

In this context, we re-emphasize national ownership of the peacebuilding process as a key principle underpinning the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission. The principle of national ownership should be the basis on which the work of the Commission should be undertaken and on which it should be supported by the international community. In our view, this makes it essential to secure the consent of the national authorities concerned when taking decisions with regard to all matters relating to the work of the Commission.

The composition of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission has been devised in an innovative manner, bringing together five categories of primary actors. In addition to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, this includes five top contributors to the United Nations budget and five top troop providers. In the view of my delegation, this mosaic of different actors and organs is a unique feature of the Peacebuilding Commission and enhances its values of inclusiveness and legitimacy. This feature will, no doubt, add strength and balance to the work of the United Nations in its peacebuilding efforts and must be nurtured in such a manner as to ensure that no competitive relationship emerges among the stakeholders in the Peacebuilding Commission representing various categories and organs of the United Nations.

The secretariat of the Peacebuilding Commission — the Peacebuilding Support Office — is new, and we recognize that it has a daunting task ahead of it as it is working, by and large, in uncharted territory, which requires continuous adaptation, especially at a time when the United Nations system is beset with resource constraints, both financial and

human. Nevertheless, the secretariat's contribution to making the Commission work is crucial to its success. In this context, while thanking the Peacebuilding Support Office staff for its contribution so far, my delegation expects that the procedures and methodology adopted by the secretariat in conducting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission will continue to improve and that more efficient, transparent and practical working methods will evolve as we continue to embark on our tasks.

The Peacebuilding Commission has been in operation for a little over six months now. It is one of the youngest organizations within the United Nations — and it is a unique organization. It needs to establish itself as a practical, credible organization capable of living up to the expectations of the international community. To ensure that it does so, collective efforts will be required on the part of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretariat of the United Nations.

As a responsible Member State, Sri Lanka will strive hard, along with others, to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission moves in the right direction and fulfils its intended objectives. We cannot afford to let this new organ of the United Nations fail.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to add my voice to those who have thanked the President of the General Assembly for having organized this very important debate.

Now that the Peacebuilding Commission has been established for seven months, it is appropriate that we in its joint parent bodies take stock. Last week's Security Council debate (see S/PV.5627) was a helpful initiative in this respect, and today's debate will contribute the very valuable perspective of the General Assembly.

We are optimistic about the value that the Peacebuilding Commission can add. It is a new body, still feeling its way. But we believe that the Commission membership is committed to practical steps to improve peacebuilding, and we will work in that direction within the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in mutually reinforcing ways.

The Peacebuilding Commission was created because there was a gap. Countries emerging from conflict had no natural home at the United Nations, and several slipped back into conflict when international attention was diverted elsewhere. This has cost too many lives. The Peacebuilding Commission ensures that countries emerging from conflict remain on our agenda, that they benefit from the respective scrutiny of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and that, for a specific situation, the national Government, troop-contributing countries, donors, the international financial institutions and other actors can work together within a coordinated set of priorities covering security, social, economic and rule-of-law issues.

I would like to align myself with the statement that was made this morning by my colleague from Germany, which holds the presidency of the European Union. I would like now to highlight some core elements of the Peacebuilding Commission's work which the United Kingdom believes we should focus on in the coming months. We all share the goal that, by the time of the Peacebuilding Commission's first anniversary, we want to be proud of the positive impact that this new body is having on the ground.

First, we believe that the core mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission is its country-specific work with strong national leadership. When the Peacebuilding Commission reviews a country, we believe that there are six fundamental things that it should do. First, it should look comprehensively at peacebuilding to identify the most pressing priorities and make recommendations covering governance, human rights and aid, as well as peace and security. Secondly, it should involve a wide range of actors, including civil society and the private sector, with the goal of agreeing on a common vision of how to build peace and promote the exchange of information and coordination. Thirdly, it should provide scrutiny and honest assessments of progress and problems. Fourthly, it should, through frank dialogue with the Government concerned, provide recommendations for action to be followed up by the Security Council, international financial institutions, United Nations agencies and other partners. Fifthly, it should ensure follow-up to those recommendations through regular progress reviews. The General Assembly has a particular role to play in that respect. Sixth, it should ensure that lessons learned are compiled and disseminated.

Within that framework, and building on the foundation of the establishing resolutions, the United Kingdom believes that there are two key areas where

the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission can develop an effective working relationship.

The first area is the oversight role of the General Assembly: providing a strategic review of the Peacebuilding Commission's work. The founding Assembly resolution for the Commission states that it should submit an annual report to the Assembly and that there should be an annual debate to review that report. We must ensure that such debates are rich and interactive so that the full United Nations membership has an opportunity to contribute to the Commission's work.

Secondly, for countries on the verge of lapsing or relapsing into conflict that are not on the agenda of the Security Council, the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council can use the Peacebuilding Commission for advice. In such situations, the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly will wish to discuss the best manner in which to proceed with the work, together with the Chair of the Commission. To help cement that working relationship, the President of the General Assembly, together with the President of the Security Council, might meet with the Chairs of the Commission to discuss ongoing or upcoming work and the reporting cycle of the Commission.

As the United Kingdom stated in the Security Council last week, there is no exclusivity in the relationship among the Peacebuilding Commission, its parent bodies and the Economic and Social Council. We look forward to discussion of the Commission's work with all United Nations organs. All are equally valid, and all have their discrete and respective roles to play.

I cannot mention the development of the Peacebuilding Commission's work without mentioning the Peacebuilding Support Office. Here, let me thank the Assistant Secretary-General for all her efforts so far in bringing the Office to life. We see the Peacebuilding Support Office as having three crucial roles: first, as a secretariat to the Commission; secondly, to support the United Nations country teams in their work with the Commission; and thirdly, to be a repository for relevant lessons learned produced by various components of the United Nations system.

I said at the start of my statement that by the time of the Peacebuilding Commission's first anniversary, it should be making an impact on the ground. In essence, that means that the peacebuilding priorities identified by the Commission are being implemented in Sierra Leone and Burundi and that the United Nations and international actors are more joined up in support of those priorities.

To underpin that work, by July the Peacebuilding Commission should have agreed on an annual calendar of meetings; there should be well-established in-country consultation mechanisms, with national Governments taking the leading role and bringing together all partners; and the Peacebuilding Support Office should be working at full strength.

It is our belief that, with the help of colleagues on the Peacebuilding Commission, we shall reach these goals.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for having organized the debate that brings us together today. The statements of previous speakers have clearly shown not only the stakes involved in ensuring that the mission of the Peacebuilding Commission succeeds, but also all the challenges that it must still take up to accomplish that. From that perspective, it is good that the General Assembly is devoting particular attention to the work of this new organ, whose achievements and progress it will assess each year.

While we fully support the statement made by the presidency of the European Union and the ideas just expressed by my British colleague, I should like to refer to a number of particular aspects of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The added value of the Peacebuilding Commission lies in its capacity to intervene in problems specific to the peacebuilding process in a focused way by methodically attacking the most urgent challenges. Participation in the Commission's work by all relevant actors on the ground is essential in that respect. I am thinking in particular not only of the States of the region, but of institutional donors. By making it possible to identify the objectives and priorities shared by all parties involved and to coordinate their actions according to a timetable that is both long-term and adjusted to immediate priorities, the Peacebuilding Commission can become an essential tool for anchoring countries emerging from crisis in peace and sustainable development.

Together with the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Fund, which is designed to act as a catalyst, is an important tool for ensuring that the Commission's activities will be focused on immediate priorities and will fill gaps and yield concrete results. It is in that context that we wish to announce today the intention of the French Government to contribute €1 million to the Fund.

In addition to the projects financed by the Peacebuilding Fund, the work of the Commission should lead to better allocation of resources and increased involvement by all actors, beginning with the authorities of the countries concerned. They must, of course, be closely involved in preparing and carrying out the Commission's work. In that regard, I wish to pay tribute to the work being done by the authorities of Burundi and Sierra Leone in coordination with the United Nations and other actors.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reaffirm that it is essential that we be able, collectively and in the near future, to achieve tangible results, focused on the countries under consideration. It is by that measure that the Assembly should in due course assess and appreciate the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Ms. Intone (Finland): Finland aligns itself with the statement made by the German presidency of the European Union.

Finland sees the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission as a key achievement of the United Nations reform process. The new United Nations peacebuilding architecture reflects a renewed commitment by the international community to more sustained engagement in countries emerging from conflict.

We very much appreciate the fact that the Peacebuilding Commission is working towards an integrated approach to peacebuilding, taking into account the links among security and development, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. With that conviction, Finland has also contributed to the Peacebuilding Fund in order to support the Commission's country-level work. We strongly encourage the international community to ensure an adequate level of external assistance for both Sierra Leone and Burundi, and we welcome the efforts to broaden the donor base for both countries.

The Commission has been able to move from procedure to substance, especially in the country-specific meetings. Areas of priority action for both Sierra Leone and Burundi have been defined. Those recommendations now have to be implemented in the most efficient way in the countries concerned. In that regard, it is also important that we aim to strengthen the common perception of peacebuilding elements.

The implementation of the recommendations of the Commission is a challenging task. Sustainable peacebuilding in both Sierra Leone and Burundi requires efforts across a broad spectrum of political commitments, security and governance reforms, development investments, and response to the immediate needs of the population. Respecting the priorities identified by the host country's own poverty-reduction strategies and other development plans will help ensure the sustainability of the peacebuilding efforts.

It is very important that civil society and non-governmental organizations, including women's and youth organizations and the private sector, also be fully incorporated within the work of the Peacebuilding Commission at the country level. Finland very much encourages the Commission also to involve the most vulnerable groups, as well as minorities, in the process of developing priority strategies and programmes.

Special attention should be given in the peacebuilding processes to questions of transitional justice and the development of the rule of law. Post-conflict situations require comprehensive long-term strategies for re-establishing and reforming rule-of-law institutions. At the same time, the rights and needs of victims of past human rights abuses should be taken into account, as should the needs and interests of civil society at large.

The Peacebuilding Commission should be a major tool for improving coordination among the United Nations bodies dealing with peacebuilding, recovery and development. The Commission needs to ensure effective coordination and coherence with relevant international organizations and other stakeholders.

When creating new instruments like the Peacebuilding Commission, it is of high importance that all main bodies of the United Nations system participate in reviewing the work done and progress achieved. In addition to open discussions in the

General Assembly, as well as in the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, chairpersons of the Commission may want to consider regular consultations with the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

The role of the Peacebuilding Support Office still needs to be strengthened. We are happy to learn that the delays concerning staff recruitment have now been resolved. Finland feels that, in due time, the Support Office could become a real strategic and innovative resource of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Finally, Finland very much encourages the Peacebuilding Commission to work in the most flexible and transparent way. An effective exchange-of-information mechanism is needed, as are special review meetings. We think that it would be very useful for the Commission to organize hearings about the progress of its work open to all United Nations Member States.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting.

Recently, the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Commission has become a general concern of all States in the context of the outcome of the 2005 World Summit. The Commission is the repository of the high expectations of post-conflict States and peoples in their search for stability and development. It also embodies the firm resolve of the international community to forge lasting peace and common prosperity and to build a harmonious world through multilateral cooperation. It is indeed timely that the Security Council and the General Assembly have held meetings to take stock of the Commission's work and to engage in frank and in-depth exchanges of views on the way forward.

The subjects of the Commission's tasks are the countries newly emerged from conflict, and especially the people of those countries, who are desperate for peace and stability. Their agreement and satisfaction should be the benchmarks against which the Commission's work is judged, as they are ultimately the designated beneficiaries and should be the final arbiters of the Commission's work.

One of the Commission's principal functions is to provide advisers to post-conflict States and to help them to prepare integrated strategies. Only by understanding the specific situations of the countries concerned and by ensuring their ownership of their own peacebuilding endeavours can the Commission prepare a pragmatic and viable strategy to ensure that its efforts are well targeted and tailored to the needs of the countries in question.

Country-specific meetings should be a priority of the next phase of the Commission's work. Ensuring high efficiency, setting clear priorities and taking action-oriented approaches should be the guiding principles of the work undertaken at those meetings. We should focus our energies on concrete questions rather than engage in lengthy debates on conceptual problems. In the interests of efficacy and effectiveness, our work needs constant improvement and adaptation in light of the specific situations of the targeted States. There is no need to re-open agreed priorities for discussion, and our interest in long-term macro-economic issues should not blur our focus on more urgent and specific questions.

The Commission should first ensure its success in Burundi and Sierra Leone. The concerns of those countries regarding the payment procedures for the Peacebuilding Fund must be adequately addressed.

Peacebuilding is a process that requires coordination among various actors. The strengthening of the Commission's role in integrating coordination so as to maximize the respective roles of all parties concerned is the key to the success of our peacebuilding efforts. The Commission must establish channels of communication with all interested parties and actors, while the parties must coordinate among themselves and complement each other's work.

The General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should, from their respective vantage points, provide active support and input to the Commission. The Commission's structure should be duly strengthened. Its Organizational Committee can base its work on the founding resolutions of the General Assembly, and the Security Council can play an important role in that regard. The Peacebuilding Support Office should also provide assurances and support to the Commission.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was the result of the common efforts of all Member States. It is our shared responsibility to ensure its continued growth. To that end, we must demonstrate

the will to cooperate with each other and to take substantive action. We hope that, through our common efforts, we will ensure the Commission's success.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today's debate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission is most timely. The establishment of the Commission represents one of the most concrete and important achievements of the current reform process of the Organization. The creation of the new peacebuilding architecture — the Commission, its Support Office and the voluntary Fund — was a direct response to the need for an institutional mechanism within the United Nations system devoted to the requirements of countries emerging from conflict.

Allow me to touch on a few points of relevance to my delegation.

The first is the close link that exists between security and development. The *Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme tells us that, of the 32 countries occupying the lowest levels of human development in the world, 22 have experienced conflict at some point since 1990. Of the 52 countries where infant mortality figures have remained level or worsened, 30 have experienced conflict since 1990. That data should not be left out of our debate.

Unless the vicious cycle of poverty and conflict is broken, the destructive impact of civil wars will continue to spill over national borders, spreading all too easily into neighbouring countries and undermining regional peace and stability. With that reality in mind, we must define strategies to reintegrate former combatants in countries emerging from conflict and identify solutions to unemployment among young people, who often fall easy prey to recruitment into armed groups. There is a clear complementarity between job-creation policies and improved security conditions in countries that have been devastated by conflict.

A second point is the need to achieve in countries emerging from conflict a general sense of ownership in the reconstruction process. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted at the inaugural session of the Peacebuilding Commission:

> "Peacebuilding requires national ownership, and must be homegrown. Outsiders, however well-intentioned, cannot substitute for the knowledge and will of the people of the country concerned. It is the latter who best know their own history, culture and political contexts. It is they who will live with the consequences of the decisions taken. And it is they who must feel that peacebuilding is their achievement, if it is to have any hope of lasting." (*SG/SM/10533*)

While it is true that peacebuilding is a collective effort that must involve the international community, it falls to the Governments of the countries concerned to assume the main responsibility for setting priorities and ensuring the sustainability of the peace process. If countries emerging from conflict do not assume ownership of the process, the Commission could be viewed as an institution that imposes solutions and does not consider national priorities.

A third element to be stressed is that the Commission cannot be perceived as an exclusive organ of donors. As resolution 60/180 notes, one of the main purposes of the Commission is to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. It is therefore not a forum that limits participation to donors and beneficiary countries under the supervision of the United Nations.

The Commission must enjoy the participation of all relevant actors in the peacebuilding process. In other words, the Commission should not create a donor-beneficiary culture. The contributions of donors are no doubt very important in defining and implementing a country's reconstruction strategies, but that does not mean that donor countries control or condition the Commission's work. All members must participate in and influence decisions relating to the disbursement of resources. The main troop contributors can also give direction to strategies for the mobilization of resources, since they work in the field and, because they have day-to-day experience on the ground, understand the needs of the State and the population.

A fourth point that we believe must be raised in this debate and which complements those already noted is the relationship between the Commission's credibility and the fair representation of its members. As my delegation noted in the open debate in the Security Council last week, that element cannot be a secondary aspect of our deliberations.

The lack of representation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on the Peacebuilding Commission is a concrete fact that is further exacerbated in the category of major troop contributors, in which a single subregion is represented by three States, while the remaining two belong to another regional group. My delegation reiterates once again that the Commission's credibility will depend, among other things, on a fair membership that reflects the participation of countries in peace missions, experience in peacebuilding, and equitable geographical representation.

A fifth element that we wish to stress is the need to identify genuine indicators of the development of peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict. The convening of national elections is often seen as a critical turning point in peacebuilding. We do not deny its positive influence in shaping the State; while it is an important step, it is not the only step in a country's reconstruction.

As my delegation stated in the open debate of the Security Council on 31 January, a disturbing trend is emerging in the world. The great majority of countries that are able to overcome situations of war and violence in the short term soon revert to the earlier scenario, with its consequent relaunching of hostilities, the resumption of violence against the civilian population, economic and social chaos, and the dismantling of the State. We therefore need more genuine indicators permitting us to achieve a greater degree of stability in countries emerging from conflict.

We believe that the successful implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; job creation; and the participation of women could be good indicators for measuring the effectiveness of a solid reconstruction and peacebuilding strategy for a country hoping to rejoin the international community.

A sixth important element is the need to steer the Commission's work towards the field. That area may enjoy the greatest agreement among delegations. There is a general consensus that the Commission's work would be more effective if it had a direct impact on the ground. The Peacebuilding Commission cannot be an organ removed from reality. At last week's debate of the Security Council, Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, Chairman of the Commission, prudently drew our attention to the fact that "our theoretical differences in New York are meaningless to those who are directly suffering from the consequences of conflict on the ground. What matters for them are concrete actions" (*S/PV.5627, p. 4*).

That is a key element for our deliberations. One of the Commission's most important functions is its work on the ground with national Governments and United Nations offices in places where the devastating consequences of conflict are being felt. The Commission must therefore harmonize its work with the specific cooperation programmes adopted by the United Nations specialized agencies so that existing mechanisms for cooperation can be supported by those that the Peacebuilding Commission may bring to the ground.

A seventh element to be stressed is the importance of the correct systematization of lessons learned. We deem it essential that the Commission, through the Working Group chaired by the Permanent Representative of El Salvador, be able to systematize all lessons learned with respect to peacebuilding and the reconstruction of countries devastated by conflict.

My delegation considers it most appropriate to include among those lessons several aspects noted so far: the close relationship between security and development; the tangible benefits of inclusive youth policies; the maintenance of assistance and support by the international community with respect to needs on the ground, beyond such partial successes as the holding of elections and the ascension of new authorities; averting the diversion of international assistance in those countries that have yet to pass through the requisite phases of reconstruction; and the multiplying effect of a peacebuilding effort perceived as owned by the population itself.

We also feel it relevant to consider in our deliberations the possibility that the Commission may take up new cases. Peacekeeping is an integral aspect of peacebuilding. We will move in the right direction only if peacekeeping operations help to create an environment favourable to peacebuilding. We could hope that the Peacebuilding Commission would gradually begin to take up new cases, particularly when the peacebuilding process begins to bear fruit. My delegation believes that Haiti could be one such case.

Uruguay is firmly committed to peacebuilding and international security, as can be seen by our position as the seventh-ranking country contributing

troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and also as the leading troop-contributing country in the world in per capita terms. Our country renews its commitment to United Nations peace missions and to peacebuilding in the world. We reiterate our intention to be part of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Miller (United States of America): It is appropriate that we meet today in the General Assembly to discuss progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. It is important that the membership as a whole remain actively supportive of this new body, which is intended to offer advice and to coordinate peacebuilding efforts in countries emerging from conflict. The Security Council has been holding similar discussions, and members of the Peacebuilding Commission and officials in the Peacebuilding Support Office will benefit from the various perspectives offered in these complementary debates.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a work in progress, and the United States is fully committed to its efforts to assist the countries with which it is concerned. We are less concerned about how the Commission functions bureaucratically than with what it achieves. The Commission, established jointly by the General Assembly and the Security Council, is organizationally complex. This complexity can be a strength if it results in greater attention to and support for the Commission and enriches its work with a variety of experiences and influences.

We need to make sure, however, that we do not let institutional rivalries or procedural debates become an impediment to effectiveness. No one working in post-conflict situations, no citizen of a country trying to emerge from months or years of fighting, cares at all about United Nations lines of authority or the institutional breakdown of seats around a conference room table. They care, and we should care, about results.

What we all agree on is the goal of strengthening the Peacebuilding Commission's ability to improve strategies to support countries emerging from conflict, to help those societies establish the institutions and systems necessary to prevent a relapse into violence. This will be accomplished primarily through the country-specific work of the Commission, and it is on this work that we need to focus our attention and resources.

The Commission provides a forum for the various agencies, Governments and organizations involved in a particular post-conflict situation to come together to share their assessments and work plans and to better coordinate and target their respective efforts. It need not do more than this, but it needs to do this well. The strength of the Peacebuilding Commission will ultimately be measured only by the pragmatic action it inspires and the difference it makes in the lives of people in post-conflict situations.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to express our thanks for convening this important meeting in response to the request from the group of non-aligned countries. My delegation associates itself with the statement by the representative of Jamaica, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 86th meeting.

My delegation affirms that the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was one of the important decisions of the World Summit of 2005. We are indeed gratified that it has decided to start its work with two fraternal countries, Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Six months after the beginning of the work of the Commission, my delegation wishes to make the following observations.

First, the Commission needs to advance swiftly beyond procedural and organizational matters, though they are important. It must concentrate on the main objectives for which it was established. Those objectives require a tremendous effort to achieve results on the ground. It is our hope that work to implement the agreed and precise mandates of the Commission will be swift and efficient.

Secondly, the General Assembly, with its inclusive membership and its more democratic character, is the best forum in which to follow the Commission's work. That can be done through periodic and annual reports. There is also a need to pay attention to the links between the Commission and the Economic and Social Council, in view of the substantive links between the work of those two bodies in the economic, social and developmental fields, as well as in gender equality, children and youth, and the increased participation of women.

Thirdly, it is of vital importance that the Commission deal with the roots of the problems in countries emerging from conflict in order to avert

relapse into conflict. That must include consideration of the root economic, social, cultural and ethnic causes, as well as of the role of external intervention and the weakness and frailty of the infrastructure. The recommendations of the Commission must be consistent with and complementary to national solutions that must be given them priority. The Commission must also adopt the agreed domestic decisions and options in the reform plans.

Fourthly, priority must be accorded to lessons learned through the experiences of other countries in post-conflict situations. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the efforts of El Salvador as Chair of the working group on lessons learned. Indeed, every conflict has its own characteristics; every country has its own specificities. However, there are some general features, such as those pertaining to the reform of various sectors, the reintegration of former combatants, disarmament and demining.

Fifthly, we wish to stress the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund and the need to enhance it. The Commission must work harmoniously and must not distinguish between the role of the donor countries and its other members. Special importance must be given to creating integrated strategies and reform and coordination programmes for peacebuilding.

Sixth, the Organizational Committee is the steering committee. The Peacebuilding Support Office is one part of the Committee's work and must help it in the implementation of its programmes and the coordination of its efforts.

Finally, my delegation wishes the Commission every success in its work, which we hope will serve as an example of success in the vitally important field of peacebuilding, especially given the sharp increase in the costs of peacekeeping operations. The challenge before the Commission is to bridge the gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Its success will be an important incentive to other countries emerging from conflict in the future and to United Nations reform in general.

We welcome the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and look forward to the eventual creation of a United Nations peacemaking mechanism that will resolve conflicts, given the fact that the Security Council, with its undemocratic structure, has proven unable to respond to the needs and challenges of a globalizing world.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): It is a good omen that, following last week's debate in the Security Council, the General Assembly has in turn organized a debate to provide all Member States with an opportunity to weigh in on the important issue of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We have noted during these debates that there is a consensus concerning the role of the Commission. It goes without saying that the Peacebuilding Commission does not belong to the Security Council alone, a matter that has been noted throughout the debates. The Security Council's debate was open, since it wished everyone to have the opportunity to express their views on that issue.

It is not important to know who has precedence with respect to the organization and activities of the Commission; what is important to the peoples concerned is to know how the United Nations can help them. As one colleague noted earlier, in our countries — and in mine in particular — the United Nations is not seen through the prism of the Security Council or the General Assembly; it is the flag of the United Nations that is seen, and that flag symbolizes the Organization's activities and international solidarity. It calls on us all in our own way to contribute to the best of our abilities to our collective task.

In opening the debate this morning, the President of the General Assembly recalled the circumstances that led to the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission. She also recalled the context in which the Commission must play its role and assume its responsibilities. Those responsibilities are not limited to the Commission's membership; they must be shared by all 192 Member States. That is why we have all had an opportunity here, today, to express our views on what the Commission can and must do.

Let us be reasonable, however. The Peacebuilding Commission cannot do everything and does not have answers to every problem. Indeed, that is not its role. The role it has been given is specific — to fill a gap and to ensure that countries emerging from conflict do not relapse. There should be no hiatus between ceasefire and reconstruction. Those countries and their peoples must not be forgotten. We all surely recall the children of Sierra Leone whose hands or feet were cut off. Those children cannot wait. We must ensure that

those who suffer in Burundi receive international assistance and solidarity.

The Peacebuilding Commission can be summed up in a single expression: international solidarity. Earlier, it was noted quite rightly that the Commission should not be limited to relations between donors and beneficiary countries. Each of us can contribute to the Commission. The Peacebuilding Fund is open to contributions from everyone, and I note and welcome the fact that the President of the General Assembly expressed this morning her intention to write a personal letter to every Member State, requesting it to contribute. We must tell our Governments that the Peacebuilding Commission needs money so that it can work, and work properly.

The Chairman of the Commission, our colleague from Angola, informed us of the progress that has been achieved. My delegation is satisfied by that progress. Of course, much remains to be done, but the Commission has been in existence for little more than six months. Its members have been striving to ensure that our decisions are implemented, that decisive action is taken, and that we focus on attaining concrete results. We also listened with great pleasure to the statements made by the Ambassadors of the Netherlands and Norway, informing us of the outcomes of the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone. In my delegation's view, those meetings bore real fruit.

I believe that it is too easy to criticize. Of course, we can and intend to do better, and I think everyone agrees that the Peacebuilding Support Office is doing outstanding work. Yesterday, we considered the plans of action, strategies and programmes before us — an entire series of activities to be undertaken. I believe that we will be satisfied when we understand all the tasks that the Commission intends to undertake. That will be possible, of course, only with support from everyone. That is essential.

It is also essential to recall that the Peacebuilding Commission is not a development agency. While that goes without saying, it is equally true that we must ensure that, with everyone's support, we will be able to fill the gap. The peoples who need international assistance must see reborn the hope that they can rebuild their countries and that there is another life possible after war, based on constructive dialogue, democracy and the rule of law. That democracy must be participatory. We must not see to it solely that elections are held in those countries, only to pack up our bags and go home in the certainty that democracy has been established and will be consolidated.

It does not work like that. Much more than that is required. Peace and the rule of law are both required for development. There can be no lasting peace, no rule of law and no democracy when stomachs are empty, when people are hungry, when people have no access to drinking water, when they cannot go to school, when girls are discriminated against. What is all of that called? That is called the combat against poverty. That is the only fight that is worth carrying out. We call on all members to lend their support in the fight against those calamities.

We are aware of the fact that is not easy to distinguish between the areas of competence of the General Assembly and of the Security Council. But I venture to hope that, with respect to the Peacebuilding Commission and the future of peoples who are suffering, the Security Council, the General Assembly and even — why not? — the Economic and Social Council will work together to ensure that the United Nations and the principles enshrined in its Charter do not just make empty promises and that concerted action is taken and substantial results are achieved, and that we can give hope to countries in need.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Peacebuilding Support Office for the useful work it has done and for having shown that, with diligence and intelligence, concrete results can be achieved. As I said earlier, I think that, one year down the road, members will be proud of having assisted in the collective endeavour of having created the Commission and of the results it will have achieved. Let me express the hope once again that the appeal made today by the President of the General Assembly will be heard not just by the donor countries, those with which we are familiar, but also by others. The appeal must be heard by all: the largest countries, the smallest ones, those that can afford it, rich or poor — I believe that this is a collective responsibility that must be assumed by one and all.

Mr. Pereyra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The recently created Peacebuilding Commission, an innovative body within the United Nations, is one outcome of the 2005 Summit and has Peru's full support, because it is helping to support peacebuilding

and reconstruction in States in countries emerging from armed conflict.

Recent history has shown that the premature withdrawal of peacekeeping operations often leads to a resurgence of conflict and violence. To make things worse, such an outcome often undermines the trust of the peoples concerned in the effectiveness of multilateral peace operations. Therefore the Peacebuilding Commission would appear to be the most appropriate mechanism to ensure the sustainability of peacebuilding processes.

The absence of a culture of peace, violence and the arbitrary exercise of power; marginalization of the weak and of minorities; and, in general terms, having to act solely on the basis of ensuring one's survival are elements that become permanent and structural in the framework of prolonged conflicts.

To redress such situations, it is necessary to reweave the social fabric and generate new democratic values of tolerance and participation. The key is to enlighten the people as to the fact that security and quality of life can truly take root only in a state of peace. To achieve those goals, an integrated approach is required that includes not only a military and police component to restore the security environment, but also an endeavour to rebuild public institutions, re-establish the rule of law and promote respect for human rights, as well as address economic and social structural aspects such as poverty and marginalization, which without doubt are at the root of many such conflicts.

Development is an essential component of peacebuilding. There will always be a greater risk of relapsing into conflict if the population feels vulnerable and if its situation does not improve objectively. The foundations for development must be laid through institution-building, in an atmosphere of justice and of respect for human rights and through the provision of services in the areas of health, education and security.

It is tremendously important also to bring about opportunities for social inclusion. A sustainable and viable peace process requires that those involved in the conflict be committed to the process and guide it in a responsible manner. In the final analysis, that is the only way to ensure that violence does not recur and destroy all that has been achieved.

In that context, inclusive processes are needed that create links of interdependence as well as obligations among the parties concerned. That helps to create common aspirations and objectives and to affirm a sense of belonging and national identity.

Furthermore, reconstruction programmes should not make the same mistakes that caused the State to fail. The idea is to build democratic societies with viable economies that can recover from disarray and overcome setbacks and therefore take charge of their destiny. Such processes should be adapted to each specific situation. Thus the Peacebuilding Commission should foster the development of national institutional capacities that can contribute to the formulation of comprehensive plans and projects that imbue national efforts with continuity and consistency, as well as give rise to international cooperation.

It is important appropriately to define areas of work and, whenever possible, to devise accurate indicators that make it possible to assess the progress made in the management capacity of a country emerging from conflict. Likewise, such indicators would also enable us to assess the relevance of and the progress made in the framework of the recommendations and assistance provided by the Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation believes also that the Commission should contribute to enhancing coordination with the United Nations and the bodies of the system, so as to ensure optimal leadership on the ground and a clear mandate for the work to be carried out in the area of peacebuilding.

Likewise, it is relevant to recall that reconstruction is a process that should be of interest to private national and transnational companies. There is a need, therefore, to devise programmes that can attract such participation and, above all, strengthen State institutions. That will enable us to ensure that particular interests dovetail with general interests and that reconstruction programmes are carried out with transparency. It will also make it possible for the resources generated, including those from natural resources — a sensitive area — to benefit the population as a whole. That requirement should take priority in the context of the programmes of international financial institutions.

Finally, the delegation of Peru wishes to indicate that it is following with interest the cases of Sierra

Leone and of Burundi, currently under consideration in the Peacebuilding Commission. We hope that this process will be crowned with success, because the objective sought is one of crucial importance not only to present generations but also from a long-term perspective.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): Ghana welcomes the opportunity to participate once again in a debate on the Peacebuilding Commission as the country-specific meetings on Burundi and on Sierra Leone finalize their work plans in anticipation of field visits. We are pleased that the Peacebuilding Commission continues to be the object of intense interest among Member States because of its unique place in the United Nations system.

Ghana associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We warmly commend the Chairs of the country-specific meetings on their initiative in developing draft terms of reference for their field trips and a draft concept note on the design of integrated peacebuilding strategies. This represents yet another significant milestone towards making the Peacebuilding Commission a practical tool for achieving sustainable and irreversible peace in countries that are emerging from the tragedy of civil strife. We believe that the two drafts contain very concrete and useful proposals that deserve careful consideration and practical support. Ghana will participate fully and constructively in their consideration.

As Africa strives to overcome the vicissitudes of conflict and the attendant misery, the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi and Sierra Leone will resonate among millions of people throughout the continent, and even beyond. Today, the concept of an international community that is committed to the progress and well-being of all of humanity has become an article of faith that is taken for granted. The mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission makes it a pillar of multilateralism in the twenty-first century. Development cooperation that is focused and efficient can make a truly decisive difference in the fortunes of war-torn nations and the most vulnerable segments of their populations.

Although not a donor agency, the Peacebuilding Commission, by bringing together all relevant stakeholders it should serve as a forum for dialogue and cooperation between national actors and the international community. It will thus benefit from lessons, expertise and experience gained over long years of close involvement in post-conflict recovery by such partners as the United Nations, donor agencies, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

On the other hand, this places enormous responsibilities on post-war national Governments, which must fact the challenge of reconciling their peoples and raising the level of their well-being. The principle of national ownership imposes the highest standards of governance on leaders, and at the same time confers on them much-needed legitimacy in the eyes not only of the population but also of development partners.

The Peacebuilding Commission itself, like any new establishment, will very likely encounter critical challenges as it grows. Indeed, we expect that the evaluation of the Commission's work in future will lead us to reinterpret and refine aspects of its mandate and its approaches to the work in the field, as dictated by circumstances. Consequently, the need for creativity and flexibility cannot be overstated.

Now that the Peacebuilding Commission has clearly demonstrated its determination to get off the ground and meet real-life challenges, we must give it all the encouragement and support it requires. Together, we can bequeath a safe and secure world to succeeding generations in fulfilment of the noble objectives of the United Nations.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomed the decision taken at the 2005 World Summit to establish the Peacebuilding Commission, just as we welcome the sustained efforts to operationalize it as a representative intergovernmental advisory body with the main purpose of translating the international community's will into concrete action and to assist countries emerging from conflict to embark and remain on the road to peace. In that regard, the Commission must remain a centre for analysis and consideration of concrete action in the field aimed at mastering critical situations in collaboration with diverse national actors. Here, the principal goal is to help rebuild States emerging from conflict.

In that connection, coordination among all external partners is no less crucial than coordination

among national actors — who must nonetheless retain ownership at all costs. The Commission must redouble its efforts to deal more swiftly with the cases now before it and to continue developing working methods that will enable it to make an impact working alongside the countries under consideration.

My delegation cannot fail to welcome the notable progress the Peacebuilding Commission has made in its consideration of the two cases before it and of the strategic frameworks developed together with the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone. But greater diligence on the part of the relevant United Nations entities is required to hasten the mobilization of resources. The Peacebuilding Fund must be provided with a simplified mechanism for disbursement enabling it to swiftly release the resources needed to ease the enormous social pressures felt by the countries concerned, whose major concern is to preserve the stability of their national institutions. At the same time, the Commission must work to ensure coherence in the interventions of various partners, thus providing a framework for harmonizing their contributions on the ground in such a way as to avoid disruptions that could undermine stabilization efforts.

Post-conflict situations are marked principally by weakened national governance with a weakened capacity to control developments that can determine the way in which the country moves forward. In such contexts the Peacebuilding Commission, with the legitimacy that the international community has granted it, should promote national collaboration with the participation of all sectors of society to seek solutions that can restore geopolitical balance through the promotion of constructive dialogue, including with civil society actors. Such constructive dialogue will make it possible expeditiously to restore the national consensus that is essential for normalizing the situation in a country emerging from conflict.

In that regard, the establishment in Sierra Leone of a national commission to direct peacebuilding efforts, with the participation of national actors, including civil society representatives and development partners, is a good example of best practices. Depending on the degree to which social infrastructure has been destroyed, its restoration can be of crucial importance in breaking the cycle of exclusion and in achieving peace. Clearly, we must help countries to move away from an existence marked by pervasive violence and emergency to a life of peace. Here, particular attention should be focused on financing for activities in the social sphere forming part of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

Looked at from another perspective, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission should lead to changes in the approach to the planning and deployment of peace missions. The Security Council should benefit from the contributions offered by the Peacebuilding Commission and provide new peace missions with integrated mandates that will make peacekeeping missions an integral part of the peacebuilding process, taking advantage of possible synergies on the ground in carrying out necessary reforms in a variety of areas.

In this context, particular attention must be paid to problems caused by continuing violations of human rights, especially those carried out by official security forces, which sometimes result in continued high levels of violence in societies emerging from conflict.

Let us not forget that we must help States to recover in a holistic manner — help the countries concerned to establish or restore the rule of law and a healthy and viable economy by promoting the establishment and strengthening of sustainable national institutions capable of ensuring that the political and economic system that results from the peace process is a lasting one.

If the actions of the United Nations and the international community are to be effective, the principal organs of the United Nations must work together on an ongoing basis. The opportunity for interaction provided by the composition of the Peacebuilding Commission must be fully exploited in order to compensate for the fact that the work of the organs is compartmentalized in an artificial way.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to assure the Commission and those in charge of its structures, as well as its members, of our support. We encourage them to continue resolutely to implement the mandate that has been entrusted to them with a view to ensuring that the international community works effectively with people in countries emerging from conflict. The Commission must now make a difference by effectively overcoming the shortcomings of the past, justifying fully the expectations that led to its creation.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for having convened, in such a timely manner, this necessary debate. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola for his dedicated work at the head of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Peacebuilding Commission is an expression of the new United Nations: a vigorous Organization that is starting off the new millennium with more resources, a stronger will, valuable experience and greater determination to combat the scourges that have afflicted humankind throughout its history.

The Peacebuilding Commission is an instrument by means of which the United Nations hopes to put an end to war by attacking its root causes and eradicating it through the meticulous building of peace. The vision of the heads of State or Government who came together at the 2005 World Summit could not have been better embodied than in the Commission, which crystallizes a vision of United Nations intervention in conflict that extends far beyond putting an end to hostilities and includes helping to build or rebuild the social and institutional fabric of countries torn apart by the pernicious consequences of war and violence.

Central American countries feel especially close to the Commission. Twenty-five years ago, our region was the victim of intolerance, foreign intervention and war between brothers. Then, we began to move forward. Exactly 20 years ago, all Central Americans achieved the Esquipulas Agreement, which put an end to hostilities and opened up the road to the future. We then turned to the United Nations, and it was in Central America that two of the Organization's most successful interventions took place, restoring peace and creating conditions that allowed all of us to live together, learn to practise tolerance and seek the road to a more prosperous future for all men and women in Central America.

If, as the representative of Germany, who spoke on behalf of the European Union, said this morning, the Peacebuilding Commission is to learn by doing, then Central Americans have an important contribution to make to its work. Ours was a difficult journey, and precisely for that reason it was one that was rich in lessons for the work of the Commission.

This may seem obvious, but it bears repeating: any peacebuilding process must begin by establishing trust between the parties to the conflict. In that decisive step, nothing can replace the legitimacy that the United Nations has in the eyes of all the belligerent parties. Beyond that, much work remains to be done, but that is what is needed: work and patience. The Organization has at its disposal that most powerful of instruments: its great legitimacy in the eyes of all the peoples of the world.

Here, ownership of the process by the actors themselves is another crucial factor. We join with previous speakers in stressing the need to hand over peacebuilding processes to national actors. Our intervention would be pointless if we did not include national priorities as a fundamental criterion for the provision of funds and assistance.

We would like to see the tangled legal web of rules of procedure sorted out as quickly as possible. We would also like the Commission to be more proactive — something that would be easier to achieve if, as the representative of Jamaica suggested on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organizational Committee were able to act as a forum for the planning, review and assessment of interventions by the Commission.

My delegation has been closely following this debate, as well as the debate on the issue held in the Security Council on 31 January, and we believe that it is time for the Peacebuilding Commission to promote a coherent and integrated strategy on the ground with the aim of bringing about lasting peace. Such an approach can come about only if the coordinating mechanism is inclusive, open and — most important — respectful of the priorities and needs identified by the receiving countries. Prompt, resolute and concerted action by the international community can then become a factor for success, inasmuch as its temporary and subsidiary character with respect to national efforts is clear and well defined.

An inclusive, transparent, constructive and creative approach is what is needed if we are to successfully address the many challenges that arise when armed conflict comes to an end. Peacebuilding goes hand in hand with human security, and it is possible only on the basis of the reconstruction of social institutions, the establishment of the rule of law, the primacy of human rights and the promotion of sustainable development. If these are to become a reality, innovative initiatives will be required that take

advantage of the structures and knowledge that exist within the United Nations. We therefore support the initiative of El Salvador with regard to the establishment of the Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned.

Costa Rica today reiterates its commitment to peacebuilding as a concept and to the Commission as a structure prepared to give shape to United Nations efforts in that respect.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3208 (XXIX) of 11 October 1974, I now call on the observer for the European Community.

Mr. Valenzuela (European Community): Let me at the outset thank the President for convening this important debate.

I wish first to refer to the statement delivered this morning by the Permanent Representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union, with which we fully align ourselves. Let me therefore focus on a few complementary points on behalf of the European Community, in our capacity as a systematic donor to peacebuilding actions worldwide.

The European Community joins those speakers who have highlighted today the need for the Peacebuilding Commission to be field- and result-oriented. Indeed, the ability of the Peacebuilding Commission to have a positive impact on peacebuilding processes in the field will, at the end of the day, be the tangible yardstick by which success is measured.

This success will depend on several elements. National ownership is, of course, the central one, especially in the case of post-conflict societies where the ruins of division are most apparent. National ownership must rest on an inclusive national political dialogue which also involves civil society.

Both Burundi and Sierra Leone are already engaged in processes with the international community. The European Community alone is currently programming with each of those two countries an assistance package in the range of $250 million per country, under the tenth European Development Fund. As part of national ownership, the challenge for the national authorities is to be consistent in the various processes in which they are engaged. Coordination and consultation with and among donors in the field is crucial to ensure a convergent approach. Jointly agreed overarching frameworks, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy, are key elements to guiding the countries and their partners in such endeavours.

By bringing together international stakeholders and experience with the countries under consideration, the main expected added value of the Peacebuilding Commission is the development of the actual peacebuilding strategies it is mandated to advance. These strategies could serve as a guide and catalyst for the interventions of the international community.

In a welcome first step, the Peacebuilding Commission has already defined priority areas. But more conceptual work is needed in order to define the form and content of genuine peacebuilding strategies. In this respect, we look forward to the forthcoming work of the Peacebuilding Commission — notably, the first meeting on lessons learned — as well as the design of integrated peacebuilding strategies on which a concept note has just been circulated by the Peacebuilding Support Office.

The Peacebuilding Fund has a role of its own to play as a swift gap-filling and flexible peacebuilding facility, a role that more traditional development instruments cannot always play as easily. In our view, the focus here must be not on quantity, but on quality money, the key being to ensure that the right urgent needs are met, whilst avoiding duplication and gaps vis-à-vis existing efforts. To that end, the necessary consultations and mapping exercises engaged in with donors and actors in the field are not delaying or bureaucratic factors, but rather a way to ensure that the Peacebuilding Fund effectively addresses the urgent gaps that might prevail in, for example, election funding in the case of Sierra Leone, or the implementation of peace and ceasefire agreements in the case of Burundi.

Within the European Union, and with its specific field experience and expertise, the European Community is ready to continue to contribute to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We agree with the numerous statements made that have underscored that the Peacebuilding Commission should be more than a funding mechanism or a donor-coordination mechanism. In this respect, we eagerly look forward to the development of the Commission's peacebuilding strategy concept. Its quality will be decisive in ensuring the buy-in of donors and in allowing for the

much-needed broadening of the donor base in both countries currently under consideration.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on the agenda items under consideration. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 47, 113 and 149.

Before adjourning this meeting, I would like to inform members that a summary of today's deliberations will be transmitted to Member States tomorrow, Wednesday, 7 February 2007.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

United Nations A/61/PV.88

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

88th plenary meeting
Thursday, 15 March 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 122 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/61/709/Add.1 and 2)

The President: I would like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/61/709/Add.1 and Add.2, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/61/709, Chad and Dominica have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in those documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 112 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolutions A/61/L.54 and A/61/L.55

The President: The General Assembly has before it today two draft resolutions: A/61/L.54, on strengthening the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations; and A/61/L.55, on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda. I would like to thank the entire membership for its constructive approach and the spirit of cooperation and flexibility shown throughout the consultation process. I would also like to thank those delegations that, although they voiced a number of concerns, have worked constructively with me and the facilitators to address those concerns without hindering our ability to adopt the draft resolutions today.

I would particularly like to thank the facilitators — the Permanent Representative of Norway, His Excellency Johan Løvald; the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Prasad Kariyawasam; the Permanent Representative of Portugal, His Excellency João Salgueiro; and the Permanent Representative of Uruguay, His Excellency Elbio Rosselli — for assisting me so effectively in conducting the transparent, inclusive and productive process of consultations that led us successfully to reach a balanced outcome around which we can all rally.

The draft resolution on strengthening the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations (A/61/L.54) expresses the Assembly's political support and gives procedural guidance from Member States to the Secretary-General. It also provides that the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations referred to in operative paragraph 2 will be decided by the membership through the established procedures of the General Assembly and its intergovernmental, technical, administrative and budgetary subsidiary organs. This will take place after

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the submission by the Secretary-General of the comprehensive report referred to in operative paragraph 3.

As stipulated in the draft resolution, the report should take full account of the views of Member States, in particular the need to take all measures to guarantee the unity of command and the safety and security of all personnel working in the field. The report should also take into account the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including those relating to specific requests by the Assembly, concerning the functioning of the various aspects of peacekeeping operations, among them resolutions 60/266 and 60/268, in order to ensure the effective management of those operations and to establish clear lines of accountability and responsibility.

By adopting the draft resolution on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda (A/61/L.55), the Assembly will allow the Secretary-General to appoint a High Representative at the rank of Under-Secretary-General to head the new Office for Disarmament Affairs. It will provide the Secretary-General with the political support needed for him to discharge his duties in a flexible and effective manner, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

It is my sincerest hope that the Assembly can move now to adopt both draft resolutions without a vote.

I wish to inform members of the following corrections to draft resolution A/61/L.54. The title should read "Strengthening of the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations". The ending of paragraph 2 of the same resolution should read "the intention of the Secretary-General to appoint an Under-Secretary-General to head the Department". Those corrections will be reflected in the final version.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/61/L.54 and A/61/L.55.

We turn first to draft resolution A/61/L.54, entitled "Strengthening of the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/61/L.54, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 61/256).

The President: We turn next to draft r
A/61/L.55, entitled "Strengthening of the ca
the Organization to advance the disarmament
May I take it that the Assembly decides to
draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/61/L.55 was (resolution 61/257).

The President: Before giving the speakers in explanation of position, may I delegations that explanations of position are l 10 minutes and should be made by delegati their seats.

I now give the floor to those representat wish to speak in explanation of position resolutions just adopted.

Mr. Malmierca Diaz (Cuba): I have th to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned M (NAM). Allow me first of all, Madam, to than convening this meeting. I am confident th your wise and able guidance, our deliberat yield a solid outcome.

Regarding resolution 61/256, I would al congratulate the facilitators — Ambassador Permanent Representative of Norway, and Am Kariyawasam, Permanent Representative Lanka — for their tireless efforts to help us the framework resolution for the restructurin Secretariat in the field of disarmament. With remarkable contributions, we would be now where we are now. As a result, we now con resolution to be balanced and to incorporate the concerns raised by Member States in informal consultations. The Non-Aligned M would also like to commend both facilitator transparency of their consultations. That pro an excellent tribute to the principle of transp the United Nations.

As we have stated in our previous st NAM steadfastly supports the efforts of the S General to improve the management Organization and to strengthen its ability to d programmes effectively. In line with that com NAM believes that the restructuring of the S in the disarmament field will enhance the e and effectiveness of the Office to deliver its m

The Non-Aligned Movement is confident new Office headed by a High Representati

rank of Under-Secretary-General will continue to maintain its budgetary autonomy and the integrity of existing structures and functions of the current Department for Disarmament Affairs. Its status under the direct supervision of the Secretary-General will convey a clear and firm message to the international community on the need for a more focused effort as well as determined leadership at the highest level of the Secretariat to revitalize the disarmament agenda.

With that background in mind, it may be stated that what we have now accomplished is a first major step towards further procedural considerations, as we understand that the restructuring of the Secretariat in the disarmament field will require comprehensive intergovernmental participation. NAM looks forward to consensual support on the framework resolution before us to enable us swiftly to embark on a further undertaking that would contribute to the functioning of the new Office.

Finally, therefore, allow me once again to reiterate NAM's support for the framework resolution on the restructuring of the Secretariat in the disarmament field. We further reaffirm our readiness to continue to participate in that process actively and constructively.

Regarding resolution 61/257, the Non-Aligned Movement would like again to thank the President of the General Assembly for leading the process and appointing the two facilitators — Ambassador João Salgueiro, Permanent Representative of Portugal, and Ambassador Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay — to coordinate the deliberations of Member States in order to reach broad consensus on the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

NAM strongly support all efforts aimed at improving the Organization's ability to manage peacekeeping operations effectively and efficiently with a view to achieving the key objectives outlined in the reform agenda. The Non-Aligned Movement supports resolution 61/257, which provides guidance for further consideration and decision of the General Assembly, in accordance with established procedures.

NAM continues to stress the need for adherence to the guiding principles of this exercise — the preservation of unity of command in missions at all levels, coherence in policy and strategy, clear command structures in the field and up through to Headquarters, the importance of interaction and coordination with troop-contributing countries, and ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel. In that regard, NAM calls upon the Secretary-General to take full account of the views of the Member States, including those expressed in the 2007 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

NAM looks forward to the discussions on the detailed proposal to be submitted by the Secretary-General within the framework of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

In conclusion, NAM would like to reiterate once again its full support for the objectives of the Secretary-General in addressing the challenge of peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Wallace (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Madame President, for your efforts on behalf of the Secretary-General's reorganization plans. We also wish to thank the four facilitators for their hard work and support for the Secretary-General's proposals.

The United States delegation welcomes the General Assembly's adoption of two framework resolutions that support the Secretary-General's proposed reorganization of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In the light of ongoing challenges facing the international community and the clear responsibilities of the Secretary-General under the Charter, the United States endorses the Secretary-General's efforts to manage the United Nations. We share a collective responsibility to support the Secretary-General's managerial prerogatives to reorganize the United Nations to strengthen his capacity to manage and sustain peace and security operations and to bring attention to the disarmament agenda.

The United States has consistently taken the position that the Secretary-General, as chief administrative officer of the United Nations, should have sufficient managerial freedom to act in the best interests of the Organization. At the same time, Member States share both the right and the responsibility to hold the Secretary-General accountable for the outcome of his actions. Our support

for the two resolutions now before us is based on our understanding that the Secretary-General enjoys managerial freedom, as authorized under the Charter of the United Nations, to make the changes he deems appropriate within the Secretariat, provided there is accountability. We welcome your assurance, Madam President, that the framework resolutions preserve the Secretary-General's managerial freedom to act in the best interests of the Organization.

We hope that, in the light of the General Assembly's actions today, the Secretary-General will move forward with his managerial priorities in a manner that corresponds to the needs of the Organization and that respects budgetary discipline and the efficient and effective use of existing resources.

Mr. Choi Young-jin (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to thank you, Madam President, as well as the facilitators, for your work on the two framework resolutions that we have just adopted. We believe they are a very well balanced reflection of the various positions held by Member States in our recent consultations. The Republic of Korea welcomes the adoption of both resolutions. With those resolutions, we have enabled the Secretary-General to take initial steps in strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda and to carry out its peacekeeping mandates.

On the matter of disarmament, my delegation believes that the establishment of a new office headed by a High Representative, with the increased involvement of the Secretary-General, will generate new momentum towards the achievement of our disarmament and non-proliferation goals. That will help us to overcome the mounting challenges we have faced in recent years.

As for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, we believe that the consolidation of support activities into a unified Department of Field Support is timely recognition of the growing complexity of United Nations field activities. The United Nations is increasingly being called upon to conduct not only peacekeeping but also peacemaking and peacebuilding operations, as well as related humanitarian and development efforts, sometimes all at once in a particular country. Coordinating those activities is crucial to our efforts to make our Organization move efficiently and effectively in maintaining global peace and security.

Once again, my delegation would like to the importance of giving the Secretary-Ge authority and flexibility he needs to ma Secretariat.

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanis* delegation of Chile would like to associate it the statement delivered by the P Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Mov Non-Aligned Countries.

Chile welcomes the consensus adoptio resolutions before us. We would like to con you, Madam President — as well as Am Løvald, Ambassador Kariyawasam, Am Salgueiro and Ambassador Rosselli — t successful diplomatic efforts.

We interpret the adoption of the resolut vote of confidence in the Secretary-General that, as we have said several times, he can i his vision of the Secretariat and of how it m out the important mandates we have entrusted

The resolutions adopted today make it we are moving towards a gradual pr implementation, which includes a review pha years' time. Chile would like to express its wi to participate actively in that effort.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our gr the staff members of the Department of Peac Operations and the Department for Disa Affairs for the excellent work they have don We urge them to continue to demonstrate the and spirit of sacrifice in the new phase we are begin.

Mr. Arias Cárdenas (Bolivarian Rep Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have taken of the statement made by the President with the two resolutions that we have ado afternoon.

Our delegation joined the consensus draft resolution A/61/L.54 in order to demon confidence we have had in Secretary-General moon since the very moment of his ele acclamation by the General Assembly. Our j consensus also constitutes recognition of the have done, Madam President, as well as the w by the facilitators working on your behalf, possible the adoption of a resolution that p guiding framework to make progress as re

intention of the Secretary-General to strengthen the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela associates itself with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement as voiced by the representative of Cuba.

Our delegation would like to emphasize that this initiative — which entails altering the overall structure of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Management, as well as the establishment of a new Department of Field Support under the responsibility of an Under-Secretary-General — is subject to the review and approval of the General Assembly. Likewise, we are aware of the importance of the Secretary-General's accountability to Member States in order that we may in time be able to ascertain the effectiveness and relevance of the resolutions that we have just adopted.

Our delegation believes that the resolution reflects the concerns expressed to the Secretary-General and to the facilitators by the majority of delegations regarding retaining universally accepted terminology and a unified command, as well as carrying out a proper administrative process. My delegation awaits with great interest the information that the Secretary-General will continue to provide us to dispel reasonable doubts regarding the coordination mechanism between two departments at the same level as well as between them and the head of mission or special envoy of the Secretary-General: in a word, how to ensure the principle of unified command and effectiveness in implementing mandates.

Our delegation hopes that the comments that have been made by Member States will be addressed in the report to be submitted to us by the Secretary-General and that the evolution of this process should serve as a useful experience at a time when our Organization is moving to strengthen itself and to become more democratic.

Finally, my delegation notes the Secretary-General's success in improving the capacities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which directly affect the security of peoples and have ramifications that also have a direct impact on human lives.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation would like to thank you, Madam, for presenting the two texts we have just adopted as resolutions 61/256 and 61/257. Your skills and your persistence were essential to achieving the consensus adoption of those two resolutions, and we would like to congratulate you and our Secretary-General on that accomplishment.

We would also like to thank our friends the facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Portugal, Uruguay, Norway and Sri Lanka, for their tireless and, at times, thankless task in formulating those two framework resolutions.

Pakistan fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the United Nations in all fields — in this instance, to strengthen the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which will now be called the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

On resolution 61/256, we support the statement made by the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Permanent Representative of Cuba. Pakistan understands that the real objective of reform or restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is to rationalize and strengthen it and its capacities at all levels, both in the field and at Headquarters. It is not merely about addressing the problem of managerial overstretch.

We were concerned at the lack of clarity in operative paragraph 2. We were enabled to join the consensus adoption of the resolution in view of the clarifications provided in your introductory statement, Madam, which underline, first, that the restructuring referred to in operative paragraph 2 will be decided by the membership through the established procedures; secondly, that this will take place after the submission of the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General mentioned in operative paragraph 3; and thirdly, that this will take full account of the views of Member States, especially with regard to the unity of command.

In that context, I would like to recall that, in earlier consultations, Pakistan underlined that, if there were to be the creation of a new Department of Field Support, it would be essential in order to maintain the unity of command to consider the appointment of a dedicated Deputy Secretary-General to oversee United Nations peacekeeping. That would also conform to the increased importance and role of peacekeeping in the work of the United Nations.

It is furthermore important in this exercise to strengthen operational capacities at all levels in the

field and at Headquarters, including in the military and police divisions. Pakistan shall raise those issues when the detailed proposal comes up for consideration once the comprehensive report has been submitted.

With regard to resolution 61/257 on the strengthening of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, we associate ourselves with the statement made by the NAM Chair on the adoption of the framework resolution. We trust that the High Representative to be appointed by the Secretary-General will help to fully implement the General Assembly's resolutions, decisions and mandates in the largely unfulfilled disarmament agenda. We hope that the High Representative will develop, as soon as possible, a concrete work plan for the implementation of the agreed objectives of disarmament.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor not to explain my vote, because there is no reason to do so. I simply wish to express my delegation's pleasure that resolutions 61/256 and 61/257 were adopted by consensus. I also take this opportunity to convey our appreciation, Madam, for your efforts to establish all the conditions necessary to ensuring a frank, transparent, open and cordial discussion on the two resolutions. Clearly, those are central themes that are of concern to us and that challenge all United Nations Members.

Let me thank the facilitators, who have played a major role in ensuring that all delegations could participate actively in our deliberations. I should like to thank most sincerely our colleagues from Sri Lanka and Norway and to express all our gratitude to our two colleagues from Portugal and Uruguay for their positive contributions, which very much facilitated our work and contributed to our success today.

With regard to peacekeeping operations, we, as an African country, are very interested in anything that could improve the functioning of this very important Department of the United Nations system. We in Africa are the greatest beneficiaries of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and that is why we strongly supported the Secretary-General's proposals aimed at improving its structure. Such improvement will provide better working conditions for our colleagues in the Department, who have fully contributed and shown exemplary dedication to the implementation of the General Assembly's decisions. Here, I wish to pay tribute to all troop-contributing countries and all those who, in the service of peace, have sacrificed their lives to ensure that the ideals of peace can triumph throughout the world.

If we have supported the Secretary-General's proposals, it is because we believe that they are likely to strengthen the United Nations and equip it with the tools that it needs to shoulder its responsibilities in the area of maintaining international peace and security. In his letter (A/61/749), the Secretary-General clearly explains the reasons behind his thinking, which form the basis for his proposals.

I welcome the fact that today the General Assembly was able to adopt these two resolutions unanimously, by consensus. They will strengthen the United Nations system in the area of disarmament, enabling the Secretary-General to appoint a High Representative who, he has decided, will be in his Cabinet to give greater visibility to this issue. That will ensure that the Secretary-General can closely follow this very important issue, which concerns all of us, small and large, inasmuch as it directly affects international peace and security.

My delegation also welcomes the fact that today, thanks to everyone's efforts, we are in a position to finally give the Secretary-General the tools that he needs to carry out his mission in accordance with the Charter. In particular, however, today we have given ourselves responsibilities in the area of international peace and security. The Secretary-General has reminded us that we are the owners of the United Nations. Today we have demonstrated responsibility. As owners, we cannot only think about dividends; we must also contribute to the efforts necessary to strengthen the United Nations system. I am pleased that that is the case.

I am also pleased that we achieved this through a constructive dialogue among Member States and the Secretariat — the Secretary-General first, but also his colleagues, who came before us one by one to explain in detail the good reasons behind these proposals. I believe that that dialogue will set a precedent in our relations with the Secretary-General. It was an exemplary dialogue, which augurs well for the relations that will now be established between Member States and the Secretary-General.

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the Secretary-General and his colleagues. I take this opportunity once again to pay a well-deserved tribute

to all of the colleagues in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for their dedication to the enormous and fantastic efforts that they are carrying out in the service of peace and of all peoples who are suffering.

As I just indicated, we, as an African country, are the primary beneficiaries of peacekeeping operations. Mindful of that reality, I can tell the Assembly how pleased we are that this resolution could be adopted by consensus. But the main task still lies ahead: giving the Secretary-General our utmost contributions and our full support.

As you yourself said, Madam President, when you sent us the two draft resolutions,

(spoke in English)

> "We need to provide the Secretary-General with strong and unequivocal support in the discharge of his duties."

(spoke in French)

We have done that, and I am glad. We will commit ourselves, working with the Secretariat under the leadership of the Secretary-General, to making our contribution, together with everyone else, in the common interest.

Mr. Hill (Australia): I want to make a few comments on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand (CANZ).

The CANZ countries want to commend the Secretary-General on his efforts to strengthen the Organization, particularly in peacekeeping and disarmament — areas that we regard as critically important. We also want to commend him for his efforts to make progress in a timely fashion. We believe that it is important to get on with the job.

We also thank you, Madam President, for your efforts and those of the facilitators, which have helped to bring us to the point where these two resolutions could be adopted today by consensus.

The CANZ countries are of the mind that the Secretary-General was elected to manage and that it is not in the best interests of the United Nations for Member States to seek to micromanage the Organization. Having said that, we are nevertheless pleased that in the early stages of this process, the Secretary-General took into account our concerns regarding the issue of unity of command.

Our countries look forward to the Secretary-General's appointments pursuant to these framework resolutions and to full consideration of the detailed structural changes in accordance with the usual practices.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): The delegation of Japan welcomes the adoption of the two framework resolutions. Japan also welcomes the Secretary-General's strong commitment to Secretariat reform, including improvement in management.

We support the broad thrust of the Secretary-General's proposals on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to meet the challenges of expanding peacekeeping operations and advancing the disarmament agenda. The adoption by consensus of the two resolutions is a vote of confidence in the Secretary-General in his reform efforts. We encourage him to be bold, or continue to be bold, in his efforts in this regard.

The delegation of Japan is pleased that the consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals took place in an open and transparent manner, particularly in the drafting of these framework resolutions. Japan also thanks the four facilitators — the Permanent Representatives of Norway, Sri Lanka, Portugal and Uruguay — for their tireless efforts in guiding us in the consultation process.

I wish to reiterate Japan's conviction that ensuring budgetary discipline and accountability with regard to the budget, procurement, personnel and reporting lines is of utmost importance. We are also of the view that it is appropriate to consider and make decisions on the financial implications of the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as well as of the establishment of the Office for Disarmament Affairs within the context of the whole structure of the Secretariat. In this regard, we appreciate the Secretary-General's commitment that his proposals are to be resource-neutral with respect to the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, and we expect that that commitment will be kept.

At the same time, we wish to state here for the record that it is our understanding that the programme budget outline for the biennium 2008-2009 that is

contained in document 61/254 will be fully respected and should be the basis for the coming deliberations.

Madam President, we share the clarification that you have just made, that paragraph 3 of the peacekeeping operations resolution in document A/61/L.54 takes into account the relevant General Assembly resolutions on the peacekeeping operations management reform. This clarification is very important. We appreciate, Madame President, that you provided clarification clearly at the time of adoption. It is our understanding that the relevant Assembly resolutions include 60/266 and 60/268, which you specifically mentioned in your statement, as well as 60/234 B and 61/246. These four resolutions request the Secretary-General to report on a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the support account, to refine the concept and functioning of integrated missions, to ensure full implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, and to submit a comprehensive report on the management arrangements for procurement, including clear lines of accountability and delegation of authority.

With regard to resolution 61/257, the framework resolution on disarmament, we expect that this reform will serve to advance the disarmament agenda more effectively. At the same time, we wish to make our understanding clear with regard to the wording in paragraph 1 of the disarmament resolution, which refers to "maintaining the budgetary autonomy". This reference does not in any way prejudice the budgetary control and discipline that is ensured by the Comptroller.

We are looking forward to playing a constructive role in the concerted efforts of the Member States, building upon the framework resolutions adopted today.

Mr. Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg (Germany): On behalf of the European Union, I would like to make the following explanatory remark on resolution 61/257, on the Department of Disarmament Affairs (DDA). But first of all, the European Union thanks you, Madam President, and all four facilitators, for the great efforts made to bring about the consensus on the two framework resolutions that we have adopted today.

As for the resolution entitled "Strengthening of the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda", we warmly welcome its adoption. It gives the Secretary-General the political start signal to implement his proposal on the realignment of the DDA. The European Union strongly commends the Secretary-General for his personal commitment to take action on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We all feel confident that the reform will help him to better fulfil his function as chief administrative officer of the United Nations, as set out in Article 97 of the Charter, and to perform the functions entrusted to him by all bodies and organs of the Organization in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. The current resolution should not be seen as in any way on impinging on that role or as setting a precedent for future administrative changes in the Secretariat. It is in that spirit that the European Union will participate in the Assembly's consideration of the reports requested from the Secretary-General in the resolution before us.

The European Union welcomes the clarification that the budgetary autonomy, the structures and the functions of the current Department of Disarmament Affairs will be maintained. Therefore, it is our understanding that there should not be any budgetary implication arising from this resolution.

With respect to the High Representative, the European Union reiterates its appreciation for the Secretary-General's choice to maintain the High Representative at the Under-Secretary-General level for establishing a direct line of reporting to the Secretary-General and to make him part of the Secretariat's policy decision-making process. These measures will put the High Representative in a good position to support the Secretary-General in his endeavour to revitalize the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and will contribute positively to its visibility.

We call on the Secretary-General to name an able and experienced High Representative in a timely manner. Leaving the disarmament and non-proliferation sector in the Secretariat without leadership for a further period would weaken the capacities of the United Nations in this field and send the wrong political signal.

Finally, on behalf of the European Union, I would like to reiterate its full support for the Secretary-General and his reform plans based on his report to the General Assembly in January. We hope to see his reform initiative lead to revitalized United Nations

action in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam President, and your facilitators for the work well done in making sure that these two resolutions have been adopted by consensus.

I would like to place on the record our thanks to the Secretary-General for coming out early in his term with these proposals to reform the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. To have succeeded in having these resolutions adopted by consensus is a good omen for the Secretary-General, as it comes very early in his term of office. This house is not an easy one to convince, but that it has been possible to come out with a consensus on these resolutions is a reflection on our part that we wish him well.

Regarding draft resolution A/61/L.54, the Ugandan delegation would like to associate itself with remarks by Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. With regard to peacekeeping operations — a very important area — wherever one goes in the world, the presence of blue-helmeted men and women is the face of the United Nations that is known to people. Those men and women have done a good job. Seeking ways and means to strengthen peacekeeping operations is therefore very relevant.

We support splitting the Department of Peacekeeping Operations into two parts, including the establishment of a Department of Field Support. Very often, what happens in the field is not well internalized at Headquarters. There is therefore a need for a unit that pays particular attention to field operations, feeding information to and working closely with Headquarters. It can only make for greater efficiency. We would like to commend the Secretary-General for having come up with that solution.

Uganda, as a troop-contributing country, has a stake in the good operation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. We would like to urge the Secretary-General to speedily provide detailed information regarding the operation of the Department, as restructured by him, so that we can move very quickly to adopt a final resolution that will help to implement his reform agenda.

I would like to thank you once again, Madam, and, through you, the Secretary-General, for the good work done.

Mr. Kebret (Ethiopia): I should like at the outset to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam President, on the manner in which you steered our informal consultations, especially by appointing able facilitators and making our consultations a success. I would also like to express my appreciation to all the facilitators for having handled the difficult consultation process in a very transparent and consistent manner, making sure that all delegations' views and opinions were heard and taken into account in the process.

I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General. As people say here in America, today is his day.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We joined the general consensus in adopting the two framework resolutions because we strongly believe that the Secretary-General should be given all the support and flexibility that he needs to bring about meaningful change in the two Departments by putting in place effective and efficient structures. We believe that, by doing so, we have given the two Departments a much better chance to have a real impact in achieving the desired objectives in both the disarmament and peace operation fields.

In view of the enhanced activities of United Nations peace operations and the growing demand for greater United Nations involvement in peace and security issues, the need to speed up the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is more urgent than ever. We have all along expressed our views on the issue of restructuring DPKO, and we once again place strong emphasis on the importance of keeping, in principle, unity of command, coherence in policy and strategy, consultations with troop-contributing countries, strengthened operational capacities and the safety of peacekeeping personnel in such realignment exercises. It is our understanding that, as is clearly indicated in operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/61/L.54, the Secretary-General will accord due attention to those essential elements and take the necessary measures accordingly.

There is no doubt that the success of the Secretary-General's reform effort and of the work of our Organization in the areas of peace and security will require the full support and cooperation of all Member States. In this regard, my country will — as it has done to date — remain committed to contributing its own share as a troop-contributing country. That, we believe, is our primordial responsibility as a Member State — to make the work of our Organization as effective and efficient as possible so as to bring about global peace and security.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has just adopted two resolutions dealing with, first, strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda and, secondly, strengthening its capacity in peacekeeping operations.

My delegation believes that the Assembly's actions in this regard are doubly important. First of all, this is the first time since the Secretary-General took office that the General Assembly has taken a stand on a proposal coming from him. Secondly, this is an important moment because the Secretary-General has taken action in an area that touches upon the very essence of our Organization and its raison d'être: the maintenance of peace.

Cameroon, which aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, would like to congratulate you, Madam, and the facilitators for having successfully concluded the consultations that culminated in this consensus. You and the facilitators were indispensable, building bridges between the various schools of thought on these issues, and we express our congratulations.

Cameroon would like to take this opportunity to express its deepest appreciation to the Secretary-General, who, with boldness and wisdom, successfully raised at the very outset of his term of office the issue of the capacity of the Organization to maintain peace and to manage disarmament. His proposals proved extremely useful in our discussions. We therefore believe that the Assembly's adoption, by consensus, of the approach that he proposed sends a message — a message conveying unwavering and renewed confidence in the Secretary-General and his vision for managing the Secretariat in areas that are of the utmost importance for our Organization.

With specific regard to peacekeeping, we should also view the Assembly's consensus adoption of a resolution as a tribute and a source of encouragement to those men and women who work every day with great self-sacrifice to ensure that peace momentarily disrupted is restored, built, maintained and reinforced.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan): Today, we are witnessing an important event, marking the acceptance by the General Assembly of the Secretary-General's proposals on the restructuring of two important Departments: the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his timely initiatives and proposals. They confirm what he promised us upon his unanimous election: transparency and the commencement of the Organization's overhaul. I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly, who was innovative and instrumental in enabling us to reach this agreement. The Chairpersons of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Group of 77 and China, the facilitators and the regional groups also deserve our commendation.

Theoretical restructuring alone will not attain our objectives. Political will and resilience on the part of Member States are much needed to overcome the hindrances to and the lack of progress towards disarmament, which is one of the top priorities of the United Nations.

While the United Nations peacekeeping efforts, the large budget and the personnel on the ground are all commendable, they are not a source for much jubilation, as they reflect symptoms of disease in view of the many conflicts raging in various corners of the world. That is why we strongly believe that the United Nations should give added momentum to the issue of the peaceful resolution of conflicts and to the implementation of the United Nations economic agenda by tackling their major root causes.

Therefore, the issue of reform — especially reform of the Security Council — should be a continuing process so that dialogue and cooperation, which are the essence of international life, can replace confrontation and increasing militarization.

In conclusion, we wish to thank the Secretary-General. We will be watching for results.

Mr. Mohamed (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting to enable us to adopt these two resolutions. They are part of the process of United Nations reform in two of the most important areas of the Organization's major efforts to maintain international peace and security: disarmament and peacekeeping.

I associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of fraternal Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Reform in these two areas serves to complete the process of United Nations reform by bolstering the Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) adopted by our leaders in September 2005. The outstanding results that we have achieved are due to the initiative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the fact that Sheikha Haya Al-Khalifa supported it, and the consultation efforts of the representatives of Portugal, Uruguay, Sri Lanka and Norway and of the Secretariat. Those efforts, with the participation and cooperation of Member States, led to the adoption of these resolutions by consensus. That should be a source of pride for everyone.

Here, I wish to reiterate my country's position: we fully support all reform initiatives and endeavours to that end. The Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly should be very proud because reform is continuing under their leadership, thus serving the interests of the international community. We offer our congratulations and thanks to them.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Allow me to express my sincere gratitude for what we have achieved today. My thanks go first and foremost to you, Madam President, for your personal leadership and commitment in advancing the consultative process.

Let me also thank the able facilitators — Ambassador Løvald of Norway, Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Salgueiro of Portugal and Ambassador Rosselli of Uruguay — for their crucial contribution in moving the consultations forward to allow for today's adoption of the two resolutions. And let me thank the membership as a whole for their support, their willingness to listen and their constructive engagement.

The consultative process may have been laborious at times, but I believe that it has benefited us all. I know that we have come to better understand one another and the perspectives that shape our actions and priorities. Today, I see the adoption of these two resolutions as a good beginning to our work together. Now we can embark on a reform initiative with one voice — a collaboration based on mutual trust. Rest assured that I shall continue to consult Member States in a spirit of openness and transparency.

How, then, do we proceed from now on? In your first resolution, you have asked me for a comprehensive report on the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the establishment of a Department of Field Support (DFS). Such a report is to include functional, budgetary, disciplinary and full financial implications, for consideration and a decision by the General Assembly during its sixty-first session, in accordance with established procedures.

You have further called on me to take full account of the views of Member States, including those expressed in the 2007 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations — in particular, the need to take all measures to guarantee unity of command and to promote the integration of efforts and strengthen operational capacities, both at Headquarters and in field missions.

Madam President, as I indicated in the annex to my letter to you dated 15 February (A/61/749), I am committed to maintaining unity of command and effort at all levels, here and in the field. By mid-April, I shall submit a comprehensive report that will cover those aspects. It will make clear the number of posts and the structure of units envisaged in both Departments and the reporting lines within and between them. It will further make clear that the DFS will be created by realigning responsibilities and resources from the DPKO Office of Mission Support, as well as from the Department of Management. I am convinced that in that way — together — we will strengthen the capacity of the Organization to manage and sustain peace operations.

On disarmament, I shall submit a report, as requested in resolution 61/257, on the financial, administrative and budgetary implications and on the

implementation of the mandates assigned to the Office for Disarmament Affairs. As I indicated in my letter of 15 February, I am determined, through the work of my High Representative, to revitalize the disarmament agenda.

On the basis of the two resolutions just adopted by the Assembly, I shall proceed with the necessary appointments, in consultation with Member States.

As I said at the outset, I believe today marks a new beginning. The road ahead will not be without its challenges, but I look forward to working hand-in-hand with the Assembly as we advance together. I look with confidence to our collective journey, and I promise, for my part, to make it as free as possible of unnecessary obstacles and detours.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

We have now adopted resolution 61/256, on strengthening the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations, and resolution 61/257, on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda.

I was very pleased that throughout the consultations process the membership was united in providing the Secretary-General with the necessary political support so that he can more effectively discharge the responsibilities and duties of his important office. I believe that a strong Secretary-General is an essential component of a stronger and more effective United Nations.

As we prepare to follow up with the consideration of the reports requested in both resolutions, I am hopeful that we will continue to work together, and with the Secretary-General, to strengthen the Organization to better meet the needs of the peoples of the world.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 112.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.